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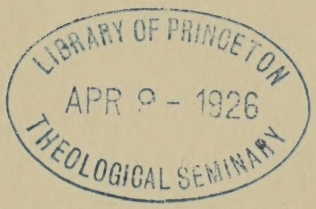


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The universal faith

# Biblical and Oriental Series

SAMUEL A. B. MERCER, General Editor

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# THE UNIVERSAL FAITH

## COMPARATIVE RELIGION FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT

By the
REV. H. H. GOWEN, D.D., F.R.As.Soc.

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TO THE

RT. REV. EDWIN MAKIN CROSS, D.D.

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. i 1-3.

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# FOREWORD

There is in China a kind of poetry known as the "stop short," so-called because, while the poem itself is brief, it is desired that the words should serve as a spring-board for the imagination to suggest things not easily to be written down.

The present effort is intended to be a "stop short" in this sense.

Much has been written to show the uniqueness of Christianity. Writers might be named by the score who have published books on "Christ and other Masters" in order to contrast the quality of Christian faith and practice with those of other religions, exalting the truth of the former by the more unsparing condemnation of the latter. The Christian world for the most part has displayed little liking for any sympathetic association with the pantheons of paganism.

Where writers on comparative religions have been willing to show the kinship of Christian creed and cult with those of other systems, it has generally been with a view to lowering the claims of Christianity by explaining all on a naturistic hypothesis.

The intention of the present book is both to

show the uniqueness of the Christian faith and its essential and vital relationship with all earlier religions. This, moreover, out of the profoundest belief that we can only give Christianity its proper historical setting as we recognize Christ to be the manifestation of the eternal purpose of God, the Logos Who in His Person, His Method, and His Mission, reveals the principles of the Divine working in the Universe.

The plan of the following chapters is ambitious, in spite of the brevity of the treatment. It was desired to furnish an outline such as might be grasped by the mind as in a single picture rather than to obscure that outline by much detail. No one is more aware of failure to rise to the height of the intent than is the writer, but he sends forth what has been written with the prayer that it may help some to see something of the scope and universality of the religion which is too often diminished to something local and provisional, a mere rival, though with better credentials, of the faiths of other lands and times.

# CHAPTER I

## WHAT WE MEAN BY UNIVERSAL RELIGION

"A thousand years
Are but as yesterday, even unto these.
How shall men doubt His empery over time,
Whose dwelling is a deep so absolute
That we can only find Him in our souls?
For there, despite Copernicus, each may find
The centre of all things. There He lives and reigns.
There infinite distance into nearness grows,
And infinite majesty stoops to dust again."
—*Watchers of the Sky*, Noyes.

### SYNOPSIS

Introduction—Is Christianity a "local thing"?—our self-imposed limitations in religion—necessity of momentum from the past to give confidence in the future—what power lies behind our faith?

The contributions of Theology and Science to the idea of the Universe—the parallel between social development and the theological—city-states and polytheism—national religion—monotheism and the imperial idea—other elements making towards universal religion—the inspiration of the individual—the place of the Jew in religious development—Jewish history an epitome.

The three paths to universal religion—1. the Exclusive idea—illustrations of its fallacy—2. the Eclectic—a con-

tradiction to the method of Nature—3. the Evolutionary —popular misconceptions—not opposed to Revelation.

May we consider Christianity evolutionary?—"Adam on his way to be born"—the Evangelists of Chartres—O. T. evidence—witness of the N. T. writers—"by divers portions and in divers manners"—the testimony of Christ —S. Paul at Antioch, in Lycaonia, at Athens—cosmic character of the Bible revelation—the ancestry of the Christ.

Universal religion in relation to human nature—the religion of emotion—the religion of reason—the religion of will—the mischief of defect and of excess.

The evolution of feeling from fear to love—the evolution of reason from aetiological guesswork to science—the religion of the will from servile obedience to filial co-operation.

Will Christianity be found to correspond with such a conception of the universal?—our survey of the subject, what it means—the one purpose, in the end and in the way, in Creation and in the Cross.

IN the first part of Thomas Hardy's powerful poem, *The Dynasts,* there is a passage which rankles whenever I read it. It is that in which the poet speaks of—

> "A local thing called Christianity,
> Which the wild dramas of this wheeling sphere
> Include, with divers other such, in dim
> Pathetical and brief parenthesis."

I confess that if I were compelled to conceive thus of Christianity my faith therein might come dangerously near to suffering eclipse. Yet sadder than the half-cynical references to Christianity which are the result of neo-pagan indifference or

ignorance, is the limitation placed upon the significance and scope of Christianity by those who profess themselves its exponents. When Christians themselves make of their religion "a local thing," it is time to examine the place of that religion in a universe where (to quote Hardy again)—

> "The systems of the suns go sweeping on
> With all their many mortal'd planet train
> In mathematic roll unceasingly."

It is fairly obvious that one chief need of religion to-day is that it possess *momentum* enough from an intelligent relation to the past to afford *vision* enough for confidence in the infinite future. It is because we accept self-imposed limitations on our conceptions of religion, such as make it merely a private solace, or a social stimulus, or a matter of race pride, that we flag and fail.

Some time ago, on the Yangtse, an English naval captain, in a mere egg-shell of a gun-boat, the *Cockchafer* (at which I was inclined to laugh when I saw it, on account of its obvious unsuitableness for strenuous tasks), steamed boldly up to a big Chinese city and threatened to bombard it for the murder of an American citizen. The officer compelled the delivery of the culprits, saw to their punishment, and forced the Governor to march in the funeral procession of the victim. How was he able to do this? Surely not out of confidence in his own valor, or trusting in the effectiveness of his tiny craft, but because he knew that the almost illimitable power of a great Em-

pire was behind him in his deed, a power of which he was for the moment the representative and expression.

Can we, looking backward and forward, feel at least as well assured of the momentum behind our personal religious life and of the power at our disposal to bring all to a happy and successful end? Unless we can do this, our religion must be, to that extent, defective.

To present anew such a view of Christianity as may show Christ in very truth the Alpha and Omega, I am trying to assemble the thoughts collected into these pages. For, unless Christianity be eternal in time and absolute in quality and universal in its reach, it sinks into being after all "a local thing" which, like the religion of the individual, is liable to faint and expire.

What we call the *Universe* is a postulate both of modern Science and of modern Theology. It is not easy to say how far Theology or how far Science have each contributed to our present belief that all we see or think of is part of a great "Oneness." Some think that Theology reached this conclusion before there was scientific knowledge of the fact. It is sufficient here to acknowledge that in either department, contribution has been made towards the result. As soon as Science proclaims its belief in "one law," Theology adds its own conviction of "one God," and the faith which from the revelation of the past foresees the future completes the story:

"One Law, one God, one element,
And one far-off Divine event
To which the whole Creation moves."

To study the growth of this idea of a Universe from the point of view of Science is outside our plan, but it is interesting at the outset to note how closely the political and social development of mankind have kept pace with, stimulated by and stimulating, the religious consciousness of the world.

In primitive times the family would be the unit and the family totem would represent its Lares and Penates, while the family across the river (*rivalis*) would represent everything alien and hostile, both temporal and spiritual.

When the family stockade had grown into the city and the city wall, the city god would be represented visibly by the priest-king, as in the case of the Sumerian *patesi,* while the invisible deity would be thought of as *melek* (king) or *baal* (lord).

Next would come, for mutual protection or for partnership in raids upon their neighbors, the federation of city-states, thus creating the nation, with its chief city and its chief ruler among subordinate cities and princes, and with its hierarchy of gods headed by the god of the chief city, now transformed into a national deity.

Still later, when successful defence had given the nation the means for wide-spread offence, would come the empire, bringing in its train the

conception of a deity with attributes transcending national and racial boundaries. Thus, in Egypt, the Empire of the 18th dynasty bred the monotheistic (or at least monolatrous) revolution of Amenhotep IV. Similarly the empire of the Achaemenians made natural the idea of a god with the same qualities of universality which had been claimed by the "king of kings." So again the empire of Alexander and the Seleucids. And, once again, following in the path marked out by the Seleucids, the Roman Empire came to give a catholic and oecumenical turn to theology corresponding to the political development. It was plain that where "peoples, nations, and languages" were gathered together under one civil rule, they could no longer remain subject to the limitations of their old theology.

Of course, there were other, and more specifically religious, factors in the development of this idea of an universal God. There are in every age gifted and inspired spirits which by "the soul's invincible surmise" overleap the more prosaic processes whereby intellectual conviction is obtained. The Greek, even with his cultured contempt for the barbarian world, could say of God, "He is our Father; we are all His children." The caste-ridden Hindu, even out of the most intolerant of sects, could declare, "There are no castes in the presence of Çiva for we are all his children." The Buddhist, it may be "out of a kind of tolerant pity or good will, which the higher-

minded should cultivate in order to reach serenity," though he proclaimed no god for the solace of human suffering, yet declared for the unity of the world order, and hung as it were a great bell in the heavens calling men to the following of a world religion.

These, however, are but as scattered hints and suggestions of a divine purpose of which the main stream shows unmistakably the general direction, a direction which is more easily to be studied in the lives of communities than in the experience of individuals. If living matter is educable matter, so living communities are educable communities in the several degrees determined in the providence of God by such things as race, history, geographical location, intellectual and spiritual gifts, character, and mission.

Thus it is no mere accident that religiously no history is more valuable, as helping to bridge the gulf between the theology which is limited and imperfect and that which is universal and absolute, than the history of the Jew. To this we shall come back more particularly in a succeeding chapter, but here it is necessary to say that the experience of the Jewish people, up to a certain point, is a kind of epitome of the experience of mankind. Judaism had its early tribal state with its primitive animism. From this, in the religious revolution under Moses, she rose to nationality with a national God, Yahweh, who was to be her own particular champion in the land she was en-

abled by His aid to conquer. Then, unlike the Egyptian and the Roman, not by expansion into an empire, but by the loss of nationality, Judaism was taught to worship a God who had brought Syria out of Kir and the Philistines out of Caphtor as well as Israel out of Egypt, and to gain a theological vision she was privileged, even through her own loss of territorial nationality, to hand on to the peoples of the earth. It was a crisis nobly used, for with enlarged conceptions of God came corresponding enlargement of the idea of the Church and of Humanity. No greater triumph of experience could be imagined than that the little people which had been crushed out of all semblance of nationality by the brute might of Babylon, should be able to sing from its Calvary of the coming of the Gentile to grasp the skirts of the Jew in order to know God:

> "See a long line thy spacious courts adorn:
> See future sons and daughters yet unborn,
> In crowding ranks on every side arise,
> Demanding life, impatient for the skies."

But instead of following at once the story of the development of universal religion, as much more wonderful than the story of the development of life in general as the life of the spirit is more wonderful than that of the body, we must at this point ask ourselves certain questions as to the paths by which we are to approach the subject.

There are, it appears to the writer, three pos-

sible conceptions of the way to a Universal Religion.

1. The first is what we may call the *Exclusive* way, by which is meant a method of securing the universal by excluding and eliminating all but one of a number of competing systems. On this theory one deals with religions as the Masoretic editors of the Old Testament Scriptures dealt with the various readings of the then existing Hebrew MSS, or as the Companions of the Prophet dealt with the varying copies of the Quran, with the result that the present uniform texts are more confusing and of course less accurate than would have been the perpetuation of many textual differences. Similarly, men have argued that if all religions but one were suppressed, the victorious creed and cult would have indisputable title to universality. Missionaries of all faiths have occasionally taken this attitude. I have a copy of an old Indian missionary's description of the gods of Southern India which was refused publication by the Society to which he was accredited because "he was sent to India to destroy the gods, not to write about them." Far be it from me to deny that he who would promote the cause of universal religion must be at times a good and courageous iconoclast. "When the gods arrive," the half-gods must go, and doubtless men like Boniface had ample warrant for smashing the images which held back the Frisian pagans from loftier views. But we must be careful lest

in smiting at the religion of primitive people we smite where God has not left Himself without witness rather than at that which is literally a *superstitio,* that is, something which has outlasted its use. The story of Paphnutius casting a stone at the Sphinx and hearing from the smitten lips of stone the gently breathed name of "Christ" is a warning to those who would heedlessly destroy all outside the limits of their own (often narrow) creed.

2. The second path is that which we may name the *Eclectic,* the picking out of elements here and there from various creeds to make a kind of cosmopolitan patchwork with appeal to all. The method has had special attraction for some, particularly in countries which have a syncretic culture. It was the Persian way, from the time of Mani and Mazdak down to the recent days of Babism and Bahai. It may prove to be the American way, unless we perceive the futility of the effort, and stop cluttering up our religious life with the wrecks of short-lived systems of this type. For, even if men doubt the wisdom of Horace, who taught the folly of so combining diverse parts that *turpiter atrum desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne,* we might learn from science that such is not the organic and natural way to make anything that is to live.

3. The only other possible path is that which we call the *Evolutionary.* It may seem strange at this date that it is still necessary to guard oneself

from the implication that the evolutionary method of reaching universal religion must be a method deprived of the purpose and direction and power of God. No study of process, however deep or high, pushed back howsoever far, or howsoever projected forward, can be effective which does not feel continuously the mystery that lies in and beyond the process. As a little child, gazing at the sun-suffused sky at even-tide, expressed her thought, "God is shining through." To use familiar words:

> "A fire-mist and a planet,
> A crystal and a cell,
> A jelly-fish and a saurian,
> And caves where cave-men dwell;
> Then a sense of love and duty,
> And a face turned from the clod;
> Some call it Evolution,
> And others call it God."

So in speaking of an evolutionary conception of universal religion, I speak not of a conception which represents the Universe as hurtling through time and space, uncontrolled, like some train with a dead engineer at the engine, but as one which needs God in it and with it all the way from the first primal impulse of "the love that made the sun and all the stars." It is God, throughout faithful to Himself, exhaustless energy harnessed to an infinite idea, in the animal which "climbs up its own genealogical tree," as well as in the spirit which seeks to rise to closer coöperation with a God with Whom kinship is established.

It is obvious that such a conception of religion will supply us with adequate reason for regarding all history as "a novel with a plot," all the past as the sphere for the operation of that "Holy Spirit of assimilation" which we call revelation, all the present, with all its apparent tragedy, all its waste, as part of that act of creation which is itself limitation and Passion, all the future, as the assured triumph of Him Who sees from the beginning to the end the travail of His soul and its reward. The story of the Universe is one story, whether from above we regard it as the revelation of a transcendent God, or from below as the evolution of a creation in which the Divine element is necessarily immanent. Not only is "the moral advance of a man a divine unfolding and growth," but the physical too, God's secret working at the web and woof of the flesh that our bodies might become at length the shrine of the All-Holy.

Let us now come to the question, so important for us to-day in America: May we regard Christianity as such an evolutionary product? It stands to reason that the Christianity which is simply looked upon as one true religion over against all other faiths as false, or the Christianity which is esteemed a kind of medley, made up of the shreds and patches of Judaism and the Mystery cults, must be a very different thing, with a very different destiny, from the Christianity which claims to be co-extensive with the whole

purpose of God, something, in fact, which may fitly be called a cosmic epic, in a sense far transcending even the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.

I need hardly say that there have been dark ages in Christian history when the first conception of Christianity was only too common. Perhaps there are still those to-day to whom all the gods of other religions are nought but devils and all earlier forms of ministry or sacrament but the blasphemous parodies of Satan. There are again those to-day for whom Christianity is sufficiently explained as a piece of eclecticism, elements borrowed from Jew and Persian, from Buddhist and Greek. But, if we ask, What is Christianity's own claim, in order that it may be the answer to all men's prayers and the supply of all men's needs, the reply will not be an uncertain one.

In one of the old Mystery Plays a figure crossed the stage at the beginning of the performance which was explained as that of "Adam on his way to be born." Similarly, before the curtain of the New Testament lifts, we are made aware that if the light of the Cross is to stream infinitely forward, it must also illuminate the way back to the beginning. The very fact that the New Testament is preceded by an Old Testament stretching back to its opening words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," will suggest this thought. Mr. Henry Adams tells us of that window in the Cathedral of Chartres which depicts somewhat grotesquely the four Evangel-

ists riding pig-a-back upon the shoulders of the Old Testament prophets, S. Matthew on Jeremiah, S. Mark on Daniel, S. Luke on Isaiah, and S. John on Ezekiel. The grotesqueness conceals a truth maintained by Christ Himself when He expounded to His disciples that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were full of "things concerning Himself."

But the Old Testament goes back further than to the history of the Jew. The real scope of the Christian revelation is best summarized in that wonderfully comprehensive statement of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds."

Such comprehension is the basis of the claim of Christ, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," and of the commission (a true tradition, even if a faulty text) to the apostles: "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of every creature." It is the basis also for the missionary strategy of the greatest of the apostles.

When S. Paul was testifying to the Jews, as in the synagogue at Antioch, it was to the past history of the Jew that he referred that he might establish the reasons for accepting his gospel. But when the Apostle came to preach among the heathen of Lycaonia (Acts xiv 11 *ff.*), he had then no need

to recite for them the witness of God to the Jew, since they too had their own experience, the *preparatio evangelica,* in the fact that God "left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." And again, when speaking to the Athenians, the Apostle, with inspired common sense as well as out of that grasp of what his faith implied, preached neither from the lessons of Jewish history nor from the lessons of natural religion, but found in "your own poets" the proper testimony to the truths he uttered.

It is, once again, the basis for the claims made by many of the wisest and most far-seeing of the Christian fathers. I quote but one passage, from S. Clement of Alexandria, as follows: "It is clear that the same God to Whom we owe the Old and New Testament gave also to the Greeks their Greek philosophy by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks" (*Strom.* VI v 42).

The cosmic character of the Divine revelation which culminates in Christ is plain from the plan of the whole Bible, Old Testament and New together.

First comes the base line of Creation, no less comprehensive than "heaven and earth," all the work of God's Spirit operating upon Chaos. Yet, step by step, we find the Divine purpose manifesting itself by selection, to the revealing of that topmost point of creation in which God may most

fully reveal Himself, the summit peak of Revelation as it is also the summit peak of Evolution, the one exactly coinciding with the other. So the animal world is dismissed from Eden, animal content now replaced by human discontent, the child of the race starting on his upward way, weak and frail as yet, but destined to find along the wilderness path, through discipline of toil and pain and death, that obedience to the inner voice which shall make his final peace. So again we find mankind sifted, race by race, family by family, individual by individual, in order that the seed of the future may be discovered, that "standard man," that σπουδαῖος ἀνήρ, of whom the Greek philosopher writes.

Thus the apex of the Old Testament triangle ends where the apex of the New Testament triangle begins, in order that the seed sown in death may, age by age, enlarge its precious harvest, in order that the record at last may end with a base line like that with which the record starts, "heaven and earth,"—only a new heaven and a new earth, with the sea of Chaos "no more" for ever, "all things new."

What an ancestry for Christianity and the Christ! When the Prophet asks his question, "Who shall declare His generation?" may not we, for our part, answer with a conviction no other age has known, that we trace it not merely, with S. Matthew, to Abraham or with other genealogies back to Adam? But rather do we trace it back

to Caliban and the Heidelberg man; we trace it to the first dawn of the thing we call personality; we trace it back further still to the birth of the cell; we trace it again to the first appearance of the atom; and back still again to the development of the elements among the stars. At that point, or at any other, it is still necessary to complete our genealogy with the words S. Luke employs to close his own, "Which was the son of God."

In such a generation there is no break, no missing link. It holds all the way from God to Christ, and Christ to the humblest who shall be partaker of His life.

So far we have used the term Universal only in the time-sense and in the space-sense. It is much to remember the claims of Christianity in these two respects. But there is another way in which the absoluteness of an Universal religion must be tested. We must ask of Christianity, seeing that it is inevitable that Christianity stands or falls with the claim to be universal: Does Christianity correspond, not only with the needs of all men everywhere, but also with the whole need of the entire man, considered as a being who is to be wholly redeemed in order that he may fulfil the Creator's plan concerning him?

There are three aspects of religion which have to be considered both separately and together:

1. The religion of *Feeling* or Emotion. Some will say that this aspect is primary, since Reason is not alert until quickened by *Feeling* (as every

teacher knows), and the Will is not moved until lifted by those tides of emotion which bear men away from their old moorings to do and dare for a great cause. In any case feeling is a necessary element in religion. The religion which is not "touched with emotion," to use the phrase of Matthew Arnold, wins but little acceptance. It is what S. Paul means when he says, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but faith which worketh by love."

Yet a religion of feeling apart from other elements may be mischievous indeed, and examples are plentiful enough from the Bacchantes of Greece and the Tantric fanatics of India to the Holy Rollers of our own day, of religion degenerating into license just as soon as feeling becomes undisciplined and unrestrained.

2. The Religion of *Reason*. The intellectual element too is an important and necessary element in religion. Our duty towards God includes the obligation to serve Him "with all our mind." Faith is never opposed to reason but to sight, which is a very different thing.

Yet here too is danger, not in excess of reason, but in elevating human reason, with all its inevitable limitations, to the place of the divine, as the French revolutionists enthroned her as a goddess on the altar of Notre Dame. Reason must "know her place"; "a higher hand must make her wise." The reason of one individual, or the reason of an age, must not be made a measuring rod for

generalizations beyond its range. One of the functions of reason is the recognition of that which, for the present, lies beyond reason.

3. The Religion of *Will*. The conative, or ethical, element too must have its place. No antinomian extravagance of emotion, no enlightened gnosticism, may dispense with morality. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." Morals, under the Gospel, are just as important as under the Old Testament dispensation, though the moral life spring from the working of grace rather than from the pressure of a servile legalism.

Yet, once again, we must remember that mere moral philosophy is not religion, and no system of ethics, though it be possessed with the patience and persistence of Confucianism, will suffice to regenerate or save nation or individual.

So we see that in these matters there may be mischief both from defect and from excess. To be a whole man, that is, to enter into life neither halt, nor maimed, nor blind, but with two feet, two hands, and two eyes, is the purpose of God in us and for us. The supreme bliss of life is not for the passionless, but for those whose passions are brought under the dominion of the purpose of God, God's lovers, not His slaves. The supreme bliss, again, is not for the irrational; intelligence is as the Latin will show, one high form of love. And once again, the supreme bliss is not for the

weak willed; all the visions of future reward and punishment, from Arda Viraf to Dante, put the weak willed outside the circles of disciplinary pain or of ecstatic joy.

The above statement at once suggests another as following in its train, namely, that here too there must be in all religious history an evolution:

1. There must be an evolution of feeling, all the way from the sense of awe which expresses itself as fear, to the love which "casteth out fear." The passion which is base and dark must grow through many stages, with room for emotion of many kinds, until it become at length that white, transfigured passion which makes the very atmosphere of Heaven—

"So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,
Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell;
So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,
Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven.
Love that is fire within thee and light above,
And lives by grace of nothing but of love."

2. There must be an evolution of reason, all the way from the myth to true science, from the aetiological guesswork with regard to things but imperfectly generalized, to the dogmas, still in the provisional stage, which have reached acceptance after the closest possible observation and assemblage of observations, from every region of that world of matter, mind, and spirit which has become man's proper heritage.

3. There must be an evolution of the ethical faculty, all the way from the servile obedience of sons and even beyond to the self-identification of the bride-soul with her bridegroom-lover.

In all these lines of development, it will be seen, progress is not by way of suppression but by way of fulness, not by the crushing out of emotion, or by the slaying of reason, or by ethical negations of the "touch not," "taste not," "handle not" sort, but by the uplifting of faculty from the animal to the human and from the human to the divine. It is, to use the tremendous words of the Christian apostle, "to be filled with all the fulness of God."

We are setting ourselves to examine whether Christianity may honestly be considered as corresponding to such a conception of universal religion. Is our Christianity something, so far as space and time are concerned, catholic and eternal rather than local and temporal? Is it, so far as human nature is concerned, something for the whole man, not involving a separation into material and spiritual, this world and the other world, sacred and secular, and so on? Was the Christ really satisfied with the travail of His soul, both as He looked back over all the past and as He looked forward to all that was to result therefrom to the end of time? Is His love really the impelling motive of the Divine Will that "moves the sun in heaven and all the stars"?

It will be plain that we are asked to take, in

a moment of time, a view of something more than "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them."

When the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley was opened several years ago, one of the most notable exhibits consisted of a large model of the world with all the different portions of the Empire depicted in red. It was to Englishmen everywhere a wonderful revelation of the far-flung extent and dominion of the great confederation of nations to which they belonged.

But we, in still narrower space, are called upon to survey something immeasurably larger. We are, in all humility, "from heights divine of the eternal purpose," to attempt some imperfect but yet practically stimulating survey of that purpose so far as it has been revealed to us for the redemption of all mankind.

We shall try to keep in mind this one *Purpose*, something antedating all time, a purpose which applies not only to the world at large but to the perfecting also of the individual soul.

We shall try to keep in mind the one *Force*, the Divine Love, implicit in Creation, revealed in all its fulness in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

We shall try to keep in mind the one *Method* by which that Love appeals to the world, the method of the Cross.

We shall see that Method displayed in Creation as well as revealed on Calvary. The Cross shines

upon Chaos "in the beginning" as when it shone on the hills around Jerusalem, yea, as it will shine in Paradise through all eternity. To quote from the suggestive lines of a living poet, the Gospel of Creation is the same Gospel as that of the Cross:

"Formless it was, being gold on gold,
And void—but with that complete life
Where music could no wings unfold,
Till, lo, God smote the strings of strife;
'Myself unto Myself am Throne,
Myself unto Myself am Thrall:
I that am all am all alone.'
He said, 'Yea, I have nothing, having all.' . . . .

" 'Enough,' His angels moaned in fear,
'Father, Thy words have pierced Thy side.'
He whispered, 'Roses shall grow there,
And there must be a hawthorn-tide,
And ferns dewy at dawn,' and still
They moaned, 'Enough, the red drops bleed.'
'And,' sweet and low, 'on every hill,'
He said, 'I will have flocks and lambs to lead.'
His angels bowed their heads beneath
Their wings till that great pang was gone:
'Pour not Thy soul out unto death,'
They moaned, and still His love flowed on. . . . .

"He spake: 'I have thought of a little child
That I will have here to embark
On small adventures in the wild,
And front slight perils in the dark; . . . .

" 'And when he is older, he shall be
My friend and walk here at my side;

Or, when he wills, grow young with Me,
And, to that happy world where once we died,
Descending through the calm blue weather,
Buy life once more with our immortal breath,
And wander through the little fields together,
And taste of Love and Death!'"

# CHAPTER II

## THE CHRIST IN PRIMITIVE RELIGION

"That in all ages
Every human heart is human;
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not;
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Trust God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

"To profess to give a history of religion is to presuppose a spirit specifically qualified for religion.

"There are, then, three factors in the process by which religion comes into being in history. First, the interplay of predisposition and stimulus, which in the historical development of man's mind actualises the potentiality in the former, and at the same time helps to determine its form. Second, the recognition, by virtue of this very disposition, of specific portions of history as the manifestation of 'the holy,' with consequent modification of the religious experience already attained both in its quality and degree. And third, on the basis of the other two, the achieved fellowship with 'the holy' in knowing, feeling, and willing."—Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige.*

### SYNOPSIS

Christ, the Way—the term "primitive" relative—the use of imaginative insight—and of anthropology—

Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*—the element of fear in primitive religion—the two objectives of primitive awe—Naturism and Spiritism.

The permanent value of Naturism—its Theology—animism—fetichism—polytheism—pantheism—henotheism—monotheism—Naturism and the Christian heaven—the cult of Naturism—omens—divination—tabu—imitative magic—mantras and sacrifices—connection of these with Christian institutions.

The Theology of Spiritism—ancestor-worship—care of the dead—commemoration of the dead—communication with the dead—present value of the anthropomorphic—and of the theriomorphic—the fishes' view of Heaven—the fact beyond the symbol.

The permanent element in primitive conceptions of God—the germ of the Trinitarian idea—as to Man and his destiny—as to Society—the Cross in Primitive Religion—the cry from under the Altar.

CHRIST announced Himself not only as the Truth and the Life, but also as the *Way*. Possibly the translation of the whole passage (John xiv 6) would be better, "I am the True and the Living Way." To the student of the history of Religion the significance of such a statement is enormous:

> "Thou art the Way!
> Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,
> I cannot say
> That Thou hadst ever found my soul."

It is because of our belief in Christ as the Way, at any and every point in the history of religion, that—given the proper attitude—we find primitive religion necessarily and vitally linked with the religion of to-day and tomorrow.

Of course, the term "primitive" is only relative. We know little of really primitive religion, just as we know little of really primitive language; the records of history are all too relatively recent in comparison with the duration of human life upon this planet.

But we can get some relative understanding of the attitude of early mankind in the presence of the great surrounding mystery of things and the mystery of life within. By some measure of imaginative insight, and by the more or less laborious collection of anthropological data, we are able to reconstruct with considerable probability of accuracy the religion of primitive man, even although we only catch up with him when he is far advanced along the upward path. Both of these methods, used coöperatively, will at least furnish us with much that is valuable and suggestive.

Suppose, for example, we take such a piece of imaginative reconstruction as we find in Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos,* we discover at once much to bring us to the conclusion that Caliban too was among the prophets of whom Jesus declared that they spake concerning Himself. Primitive man is here already, to use the suggestive term of Dr. Otto, *numinous,* creaturely-conscious, by ways entirely apart from the rational, of the *mysterium tremendum* outside himself.

While Caliban, in his body, is kicking both feet in the cool slush, a dawning spiritual sense is awake and responsive to a stimulus. Out of his

"daemonic dread" in presence of the unknown there is the potentiality of a reverence which will grow to love. Out of the respect he evinces for the traditions received from his mother is to arise a capacity for fellowship in faith such as shall create a Church. Out of the self knowledge which inclines him to postulate certain things of God is to come that sense of kinship so triumphantly vindicated in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Out of the acts of propitiation, ritually organized, is to come the whole development of prayer and sacrifice which will fulfil our needs of communion with a loving God. Both the creed and the cult of the Christian are discernible in the speculations of the man just emerging from the slime, as the limbs and viscera and brain of the human being are predictively present in the embryo.

Summarizing the data derivable from the widest survey of the anthropological field, we find nothing essentially different from what has been seized by the intuition of the poet.

First, we find what has generally been described as *fear,* following the famous line of the Latin poet Petronius,

*"Primus in orbe fecit deos timor."*

It is that which Otto calls the sense of the numinous, that *mysterium tremendum* with its two poles of dread and attraction,—the *tremendum* and the *fascinans.* Others call it *cosmic emotion.* I prefer the simple term *awe,* the emotion which

is undoubtedly at first largely fear, but a fear capable of transformation into the ecstasy of love. To the end, of course, fear is to have a certain place in religion. The sense of dread in the presence of the infinite mystery must have its permanent value. As Goethe says (*Faust* 2nd. part, I v):

> "Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes Teil.
> Wie auch die Welt ihm das Gefühl verteuere,
> Ergriffen fühlt er tief das Ungeheuere."

To supersede too rudely this element of religion is not only to rationalize religion unduly, but also to weaken its moral power over the consciences of men.

But in primitive religion, Awe (or Fear) is seen to be felt in two directions, each of which has an important share in moulding the creed and institutions and practices of religion.

The first form of awe (not necessarily, of course, in time sequence) is the emotion felt by primitive man in the presence of the phenomena of *Nature.* It is this which has given us the word *Deus,* with all its derivatives as suggestive of the God in and beyond Nature. This aspect of religion, to which we may give the term *Naturism,* has given us the conception of a God immanent in Creation.

The other form of awe is that which arises in the presence of the mystery of *Death* and has developed along the lines of what we call *Spiritism.* It gives us those conceptions of God which are in the main derivable from the Greek word *Theos,* ultimately from a root signifying *to breathe.*

In the former case the spiritual element regarded as supplementing the material is suggested by the analogy of the wind which seems to vivify the natural world; in the latter case that spiritual element is denoted by the breath which fills or leaves the human body.

It would seem to be a common error on the part of anthropologists to select and seize upon one of these two forms of awe to the neglect of the other, in order to build up a theory of religious origins. To one the sight of the stupendous marvels of Nature, "the spacious firmament" at night, the rising sun, the rolling storm-clouds, has been the all sufficient explanation of the fact that man is "incurably religious." To another, religion is nothing but the beliefs and worship inspired by the fear of ghosts or by the baseless visions of the night. It should be clear from the outset that, in order to account for all the facts, both Naturism and Spiritism must be allowed their proper place, and to a large extent their separate lines of development. We must even have permanent room both for the awe which breeds mingled pride and humility as we stand beneath the starry vault of heaven, and for the awe which we feel when bending in prayer in the presence of the dead. The universal religion of which we are in quest must be a synthesis of both evolutions, not academically or artificially, but naturally and vitally, with a full revelation of all that a God may be, both immanent and transcendent, and of all that the mys-

tery of Nature may symbolize to us, and all that we may learn from the darker mystery of Death.

*Naturism*—to devote a few words to this aspect of our subject—must be a permanent element of true religion to save us from the errors of the Manichaean and from those other forms of dualism which separate God from His created work. He who links God with Nature, however crudely, is already on his way to an appreciation of the central doctrine of the Christian faith, namely, the Incarnation. No Christian need sigh to be "a pagan suckled in a creed outworn" in order that he may obtain those glimpses of God in Nature to make him "less forlorn." The Creation is divine self-limitation no less than the Cross, yet, no less than the Cross, it is the revelation of supremest Love.

Historically (though not always with the same sequence) Naturism develops in general along the following lines:

First, in respect to its *Theology,* we have that sense of the numinous which recognizes and responds to something alive and spiritual in the world outside oneself and in every part of that world. We may, if we will, speak of this as *animism,* so long as we use the term in no restricted technical sense but as denoting that doctrine of "universal vitality" spoken of by Tylor. A step forward or backward, as the case may be, is to be found in what is known as *fetichism,* whereby the possession of some object possessed itself of di-

vinity, it may be the stone against which one has lately stubbed one's toe, may be regarded as giving one a special control over divine forces capable of helping or of hurting. This leads to certain forms of localizing deity, and presently to the reverence of certain trees, or springs, or stones, as the residence of God. Among men of higher attainment intellectually and spiritually, the sense of wonder in the presence of natural phenomena will lead to *personification* and so on again to *personalization.* Then, under the stimulating influence of a poetic imagination, or out of the social changes involved by the federation of a number of city states, a *polytheism* will be created, with its multiplicity and its hierarchy of gods. Some will be representative of different objects in nature, such as sun and wind and rain. Some will represent abstractions, even such prosaic ones as the *indigitamenta* of the old Roman religion. Some will be sun-gods or storm-gods called by different names because originating in different communities. Some of them will retire with changing circumstances back into "the Quiet," through loss of popular interest or through supposed change of celestial dynasty. Some will sink into a court of subordinate deities, or angels. Some again will change their character, storm-gods becoming war-gods, and so on.

Then philosophy may step in, resolving all such polytheisms, on the one hand, into what we call *Pantheism,* in which all idea of transcendency is

lost and all the manifestations of Nature viewed as the self-revelation of an eternal Absolute identical with Nature. Or, on the other hand, polytheism may pass by way of national religion into the worship of one deity, the rest being ignored and forgotten. This stage, to which the name is given of *Henotheism,* or *monolatry,* may pass, as in the case of the Jew, into a true *Monotheism.*

All these lines of development and all incidents of the development have their importance. As Dr. Israel Abrahams writes: "It is not enough that primitive ideas made way for advanced ideas .... Rise as we will, there is always a residue of the primitive left; the higher ideas would be different but for that residue; and not only different but worse. It is the primitive in the advanced which gives the advanced its flavor. It is the abiding, indelible, eternal survival of the past in the present which binds the generations in a true tradition, that makes the present livingly adaptable to conditions of life."

Thus both Indian Pantheism and Hebrew Monotheism have contributed to the Christian theology, the one as preserving for us the doctrine of the Divine Immanence, and the other as securing for us the doctrine of Divine Transcendence; the one helping to keep God near, and the other to preserve the *mysterium tremendum* which is required to keep religion supra-rational.

All the accessories, moreover, of Natural Theology, the splendor, the power, the purity of the

upper world, have been carried along with the unfolding revelation to supply elements in the conception of the Christian Heaven which are essential parts of the symbolism of faith. Even in the Christian Creed, which declares "He ascended into Heaven," we are obliged to use the language of mythology. By a necessity of language we employ the same metaphor which furnished alike the Greek with his picture of Olympus and the gods "who lie beside their nectar," and S. Bernard with the immortal vision of

"*Urbs Sion unica, mansio mystica, condita, coelo.*"

To quote again the thought, if not the precise words, of Dr. Abrahams, it is primitive to think of God as close at hand; it is primitive again to place Him in a local heaven. Yet without these two primitive ideas we could not have our present sense of God's presence in Nature and His power beyond.

Nor is the *cult* which grew up gradually as the ritualization of these beliefs of less importance. Out of the primary awe arising from the felt presence of God in Nature developed many of the practices which still survive in some form or other as essential elements of the religious life of to-day. This is true in spite of the many outworn forms which are dropped by the way or are left to be the mere playthings of the unreflecting.

First, perhaps, comes the recognition of *Omens*, that particular use of the revelation of Nature

which arises when men, with simple, child-like minds, seek to understand the significance of her many voices.

Next, comes the more deliberate and self-conscious pursuit of that revelation in the many practices which we sum up under the general name of *Divination.* Here man, instead of awaiting passively the leading of Nature, follows to her most secret shrines to interrogate her wisdom.

Next, not necessarily, of course, in time, we find the religious faculty attaining some degree of moralization, at least on the negative side, by coming under the beginnings of law in the form of *Tabu.* It is recognized that there is danger in the transgressing of Nature's commandments, even though these commandments may be imposed and interpreted by the tyranny of priest or chief.

On the positive side, comes that most fruitful adventure in religious experience which we describe under the inadequate term of *Imitative* or *Sympathetic Magic.* It represents the belief on the part of primitive man that it is possible for him to coöperate effectively with Nature, imitating her methods and securing her results, even, on occasion, stimulating the flagging forces of Nature in the daily miracle of the sunrise or the annual miracles of rainfall and harvest.

When all these practices have been duly ritualized, it is seen that the foundations of many of our religious institutions have been permanently laid. It would be interesting to follow this out in

detail, but the exposition would require more space and time than is fitting in this brief survey.

But, still further, beyond the effort to assist the processes of Nature and to secure her results, we find in primitive religion the belief that Nature may even be conquered and subdued to the advantage of a particular tribe or individual. There were powers, it was believed, in Nature which could be enslaved and compelled to work the will of man, if only the proper spell, or *mantra,* were uttered, or the proper *sacrifice* laid upon the altar.

In all these things there are, of course, elements which have fitly enough been allowed to become obsolete, or to be classed among the things we call superstitions. But it has been the fashion to deal too irreverently with this stage of religion, as though representing nothing but a piece of barbaric naturalism. It is necessary not only to remember the degree of divine leading to be discerned even thus early in the history of mankind, but also to remind ourselves of how much that is vital to religion has moved upward all the way, growing with our growth and expanding with every increase of light. The science of to-day, for instance, differs only from the knowledge which interpreted omens and consulted divinations in its completer generalizations and sounder deductions. Imitative Magic suggested crudely to primitive man the tremendous part man plays to-day as a co-worker with Nature in the fulfilment of

the divine order. The use of mantras and sacrifices to force God's will on our behalf has grown into the Christian doctrine (often enough but slightly apprehended even to-day) as to prayer and communion with the divine. As already pointed out, even the very crudenesses of the early stages still have their place for "the enduring primitive" which is in us all. It is important to insist on all this, not only lest in our processional pride we should ignore the proper recessional humility, but mainly in order that we should conceive aright of the whole history of religion as one continuous, God-inspired, and God-directed effort to transform the primeval Chaos into the perfect brightness of the celestial day.

Turning to the second object of cosmic emotion, we find, as was above suggested, awe in the presence of the mystery of *Death.* This awe at the first may very well have consisted, in the main, of fear. Especially must this have been the case, occurring very frequently, where death due to the prevalence of epidemic disease seemed the work of a malignant and revengeful spirit. Yet, even in early times,—the *fascinans* manifesting itself together with the *tremendum*—such fear could not but be mingled with some measure of grief and affection. And out of it all was to grow not only a theory as to the lot of the dead in another state of existence, but also a closer sense of family unity and an enlarged conception of life as potentially triumphant over death.

The steps in the development of the Spiritistic creed are, to speak generally, as follows:

First, there grew up a firm belief in the *continued personal existence* of the dead. It matters not to-day how that belief originated or by what arguments it was sustained. There may very well have entered the witness of dreams; there may very well again have been present the feeling that the outbreak of contagious disease was the work of some displeased spirit of the dead. The important fact is that the belief, at its very crudest, contained a predisposition to, a divination of, the highest Christian faith as to the future, and thus was able illimitably to grow, rather than to disappear among the outgrown fancies of early man, a mere "tribal fantasy" of the anthropologist. In any case, too, it had value as making for the solidarity of the family, living and dead. It thus continued to give honorable place to those whose strength and wisdom had served the clan in life. These must still be recognized. So appeared the germ of something which was later to take shape as the Christian doctrine of "the Communion of Saints."

In many, perhaps in most, this sense of the continuity of family life extending backwards out of sight, took form in what we call *Totemism*, whereby ancestry was honored in a certain animal, or even in a certain plant. Need I point out here the significance of this *theriomorphic* element in religion, not alone in the primitive past?

For all along the way, it served its purpose, as witness the beast-fables and the *jatakas* of the Indian writers, or as witness the symbolisms of heraldry, individual and national, down to the last cartoon depicting the Gallic cock or the American eagle. Even in the highest form of religion the theriomorphic still maintains a certain position. The symbols of the *Lamb of God,* the *Dove* of the Spirit, the *Four Living Ones* of the Apocalypse, are all living and valid to-day, in spite of their derivation. And their usefulness, moreover, is by no means confined to the realm of symbolism, since they serve to push back the influence of the Cross beyond the desires of the sons of men to the groaning of all creation awaiting the redemption of all things. The modern science of evolution is more religious than it sometimes deems itself, even as S. Francis was closer to the facts of modern science than men imagine when he preached to the birds as his little brothers and sisters and held the wolf of Gubbio as within the reach of his evangel.

From the belief in the continued existence of the dead arose the *deification of the dead.* It was inevitable that the "first ancestor" must be the lord of the realm to which he was the first to establish claim. So the dead became the *Elohim* (the Powers), the *pitri* (fathers), the *shên* (spirits), the *kami* (the gods). Yama, or Yima, and his representatives in other lands, became kings among the dead, and so gods.

Moreover, the realm to which the dead descended, though but a hole in the ground conceded by the abandonment of the old cave dwelling place to the deceased, expands gradually into a kingdom. It is shadowy and gloomy, such a place as makes natural the immortal plaint of Achilles. But it is nevertheless a realm. There the dead lie, asleep or restlessly awake, in their several camps, "all of them slain, fallen by the sword" (Ezek. xxxii).

With belief in the realm of Hades grew up the belief in those accessories of the lower regions, such as the *Bridge,* originally, perhaps, the log across which the primitive man passed unsteadily to his rest beyond the river; the *Dog,* the pariah beast, dog, jackal, or pig, which, rooting among the graves, is eventually raised to function among the underworld gods—all forming part of a grim mythology which, step by step, rises into Christian allegory of which the truth must still be expressed mainly by symbol.

In Spiritism, as in Naturism, creed becomes the basis for cult. Of the profound influence of *Totemism* and *Ancestor-worship* upon social evolution there is no need to speak. The very lowest of mankind, as in the case of the aborigines of Australia, have had their part in it. In the case of China, ancestor-worship has had a large part in the creation and sustaining of a great ethical system which only awaits the spiritualizing touch of

Christ to become extraordinarily potent for the welfare of mankind.

In fact, everything in the practices of Spiritism possesses a value by no means confined to the archaeological. The care of the dead, the disposal of the dead, the commemoration of the dead, even communications with the dead, have, in relation to past practices, their present values. There were in the actions of simple and child-like savages, expressions of feeling which were manifestations of divination as well as the gropings of reason, certain aspirations of a living faith which rise all the way out of darkness into the very presence of God.

Of course, the danger to modern men is lest they yield to the temptation to stay with the first stages instead of accepting the new steps which are offered to their feet. That is why, in the case of Spiritism especially, certain beliefs and practices have become exceedingly mischievous. That is why, even for the Hebrew, the older forms of necromancy were forbidden by religious authority, when a new stage of religious experience opened up. The old belief in personal continuance of life beyond the grave, valid as it was, remained too tenuous, too shadowy and gloomy, when limited and tied up to the old theology. Life needed to be enriched in quality by a new conception of God as well as by an enlarged conception of life before it would be possible to lift to higher levels the

doctrine of personal immortality. Thus "the road to Endor," of which Kipling warns the world, is a way backward rather than forward. The steps trodden by early men on their way towards the light were valid for themselves, but not for others, even though we confess ourselves as brothers in a common pilgrimage along the highway to diviner life.

Now to sum up the main points to which I have limited myself in this chapter:

Don't let us despise the *anthropomorphic* in religion. It was necessary in the early stage; its necessity has by no means disappeared, since we have no knowledge of aught but ourselves out of which knowledge to find terms to express our understanding of God. The word "Father," anthropomorphic as it is, is still to-day more practically stimulating in the religious sense than the most philosophic definition of the Deity ever coined. The great thing to remember is that the terms we thus employ are not definitions at all, but symbols; symbols, moreover, effective to the limit only of their own symbolism. For example, my finger, pointed to the sun when I exclaim "The sun is over there," is a true symbol only so far as, instead of fixing the eye of the beholder on the end of the finger, it suggests to that eye the following of a line projected infinitely from that finger end to the object designated.

The anthropomorphic has greater warrant still, for God does indeed touch man through Nature,

even as man rises to communion with God through his immortal spirit.

Even the *theriomorphic,* as already hinted, is not put completely out of court. Christianity bids us realize the share all Nature has in the method by which the world is lifted up from weakness to power through sacrifice. In this the brute creation has, of course, its portion. The swine that ran violently down a steep place to perish in the waters, were nearer Calvary than the worldly drovers who complained of the loss of wealth incurred by the presence of Jesus in their midst. The "shabby old scapegoat" was nearer to the program of Messiahship which Jesus illustrated on Quarantania than were the ideas of priest and people. The ass on which the Saviour rode into Jerusalem, she too had a share in the Passion, and in its results. So perhaps the conception of Heaven which Rupert Brooke quaintly attributes to the fishes may represent—for them—something as real as the symbols, just as inadequate, we employ for our own edification:

"Somewhere beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun;
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh, never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in that Eternal Brook,

But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all they wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish."

Beyond these generalizations emerge three broad hints as to what religion is to be, when the primitive has become the universal:

1. *As to God.* God is *transcendent,* the "wholly other," the Maker, anterior to and superior to His work. God is also the Work, the Visible, the Idea fulfilled in Creation, and most consummately in that crowning point of Creation which reflects most perfectly the Divine Idea, the *Human.* God is, once again, the *Immanent* Spirit abiding in the work, the Spirit by which creation is informed and inspired. Thus from the first we have the Trinity in germ, no mere dogma of ecclesiastics and schoolmen, but something from the first necessary to distinguish God from the impersonal "simple force" to which some would reduce Him.

2. *As to Man and his Destiny.* We find that destiny from the first largely and prophetically conceived. The material is at no point a sufficient explanation of the mystery of humanity. There is a *mysterium tremendum* about Man as well as about God. Man's spirit rises superior to the limits of time and matter. The future world is indeed as yet but slightly moralized, but, as in life, so in

death, to be a member of the clan is to be within, to be an outcast or an alien is to have one's portion "without the camp."

3. *As to Society.* Here too there is the presentiment of something vast, catholic, undefined, mysterious. The very mystery of worship in the earliest times, like the mystery which still clings to the ritual and language of the Mass, or the mystery of the far distances in some Gothic Cathedral, suggests these large conceptions of what communion is in store for the souls of men. Primitive society might be only the clan or the tribe, but, both here and hereafter, there was suggested a solidarity which only sin (whatever the conception of sin might be) might break. To be a member of a human family necessitated the recognition of obligations which left no man free in the selfish sense. The higher the position of leadership accorded to the individual, the more insistent became the ties. The rule was evermore, "He who did most shall bear most." And to be "gathered to the fathers" (even though within the narrow limits of a desert grave) embodied something of the larger hope. The social morality which held within itself the power of inclusion or of exclusion possessed in an ever unfolding way the promise of judgment to come, of heaven and of hell.

Bloody too as were all the rites which primitive man accepted as the conditions of his existence, the blood shed, we doubt not, was not infrequently

part of the sacrificial life-stream which flowed beneath the altar of the living God. Here too was life as yet unvindicated, awaiting the perfect revelation of the Divine Love, and in the meantime crying, like the saints of Judaism, for the answer which came at last from the Cross:

> "How long, O Master, the holy and true,
> Dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood,
> On them that dwell on the earth?"

# CHAPTER III

## THE CHRIST IN JUDAISM

"What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way."—*S. Paul.*

"*Israel*: To gather me my chieftains Thou didst promise,
The day comes not and miracle is none,
Nor see I temple built nor any herald
Of Peace arrive to be My Holy One—
Ah, wherefore lingers Jesse's promised son?

*God*: Behold, I keep the oath I swore to gather
My captives—kings shall bring their gifts to thee.
Created for a witness to the nations,
My holy ones shall testify to Me.
Yea, Jesse's son Mine eyes already see.
—*Ibn Gebirol.*

### SYNOPSIS

In what is Jewish religion unique?—its association with the lineage of the Christ—the ancestry of Christ—its foreign element—the geographical and historical contacts of Judaism—Judaism as receiver, carrier, distributor of world ideas—her conservative (centripetal) force—her centrifugal force—the two capitals of Judaism—Jerusalem and Alexandria.

The liaison of Jewish religion with primitive religions—Israel and primitive Semitism—"the Amorite was thy father and thy mother was an Hittite"—the special qualities of Hebrew religion—its attitude and its earnest-

ness—the limitations of early Hebrew religion—in conception of God—in limited views of Society—in ideas of human destiny.

The religious revolution under Moses—the covenant with Yahweh—enlarged conception of God—and of society—national religion—the nomad—the agriculturist—the beginnings and growth of prophetism—the work of the prophets—the gains, theological and moral, they brought—the collapse of nationalism—Judaism monotheistic—and her religion international—the struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal—the Holiness to be preserved—and to be proclaimed—Judaism in touch with the Greek—the message of the sage—the martyrdom of Judaism—and its effect upon views of human destiny—the doctrine of a future life.

The gains of Jewish religion for the world's use—a universal God—a world-wide society—the religion of the individual—life beyond the grave—Apocalyptic dreams of the Theophany and Theodicy—the method of the Cross—"His Blood be on us and on our children"—Emma Lazarus on The Passion of Israel.

IT is frequently asserted—indeed it has been already assumed as a fact in these pages—that the record of the revelation given to the Jew in the Old Testament Scriptures forms but one Old Testament among many designed to prepare the minds of men for the dawn of the new day of the spirit. This is, of course, a point of view invaluable to the modern missionary who in delivering his message is careful to find the precise point of departure in the minds of his hearers. But, nevertheless, the assertion needs some qualification, since it would be impossible, even if the Jewish Scriptures did not exist, to overlook the special

*rôle* which the Jew has been called upon to play in establishing a *liaison* between the old and the new.

The reasons for assigning this distinction to Judaism (using the term for the present of the religion of Israel in all its stages) may be assembled as follows:

1. *First,* because the human lineage of Christ is traced, in the main, from the seed of Abraham. Let us note the significance of the qualification "in the main," since S. Matthew, the most Jewish of the four Evangelists, has taken pains to reveal to us the intrusion of the foreign element in the case of the three named ancestresses of Christ, namely, Rahab, the Canaanitess, Ruth, the Moabitess, and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. It is not a little suggestive as proclaiming the extent to which the Christ lays hold upon all our humanity, with its sins and failures, that of the only four women mentioned prior to the Virgin Mother in Our Lord's genealogy, three are aliens by blood and three are women with a blot upon their character. It is additional evidence offered, by one mainly concerned to show that Jesus is the Son of David, that He is also, in the fullest sense, "Son of Man."

2. *Secondly,* because the geographical and historical contacts of the people of Israel made them the inevitable receivers, carriers, and distributors of ideas from and between the great world powers of the pre-Christian epoch. Like a full stream fed

by many tributaries, Judaism bore the waters collected from these many sources towards the ocean of their fulfilment. "The giant forms of empire" with which Israel was brought into tragic conflict were "on their way to ruin." Yet they yielded up, ere they fell, those gifts of the spirit with which they had been dowered to the Judaism they despised and upon which they trampled. All these several contributions, which some have feared to acknowledge lest they should seem thereby to be doing violence to the unique claims of Christianity, from the creation myths of Babylon to the angelology of Persia, or to the philosophies of Greece, must, on the contrary, be regarded as essential to the completeness of the Hebrew witness. The Jew was a guest, or a captive, in every land, just in order that he might be the link between what God had already revealed and the new things which were yet to appear.

3. *Thirdly,* because what Judaism was able to receive from the Gentile world—what by reason of her geographical position in the corridor between the continents she was enabled to gather—she was also by the same fact to distribute. As we shall see a little later, she possessed a *centripetal* force which enabled her to concentrate and retain; she possessed also a *centrifugal* force which impelled her to distribute. In her one capital, Jerusalem, loyalty to what had been committed to her became a passion, and well nigh a fanaticism. In her other capital, Alexandria, she

developed a sense of mission and became, almost in spite of herself, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Yet, while stressing this important point as to the uniqueness of Judaism in preparation for the Universal Religion, we must be careful to remember that the religion of Israel was a kind of *liaison* officer with a duty at either end of its remarkable history. At the point where the developed product of the faith of Abraham, as an accumulated fund of both faith and experience, is poured into the life of the New Dispensation, there are links which have not failed to obtain general recognition. The nationality of the first apostles, the use of the Hebrew scriptures, the emphasis placed upon the fulfilment of the Jewish sacrifices, the dramatic passing of the Temple system,—all this has made the fact inescapable. *In Novo Testamento patet quod in Veteri Testamento latet.*

But the *liaison* is just as significant at the remoter point, where the religion of Israel first begins to differentiate itself from the religions of the surrounding Semitic tribes. We have at this point a contact, providentially ordered, which, although it has been less observed, is equally suggestive.

Let us try to connect this chapter with the last by noting some of the salient features of this particular relation. It will enable us to see in what way the truths dwelt upon as glimpsed in primitive religion were acted upon, as by a subtle kind of alchemy, in the laboratory of Jewish experi-

ence, to be turned over to the uses of Christianity.

It is a distinct gain to the service of religion that the supposed separateness of early Israel in race, language, and religion is no longer maintained. The older idea was partly due to the chauvinistic pride of the Jew, partly to our own traditional misconception of what was meant by the term "the chosen people." Now that archaeology, philology, and comparative religion have all alike thrown light upon the subject, we see how little, in the Bible itself, the traditional theory had in its favor. It is much more significant to recognize with Israel that the Hebrew language was "a tongue of Canaan," an ordinary Semitic dialect, than to think of it as the sacred primal language, spoken by our first parents as they walked among the glades of Eden. It is much more significant to appreciate the somewhat brutal force of Ezekiel, when he bade the Jews remember: "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was an Hittite" (Ez. xvi 3), than to think of the Jew as unrelated to the world in which he moved. So in religion, we must bear in mind that the quality of Hebrew faith and its value for the fulfilment of the divine plan was in no wise conditioned by the advanced character of its theology or by the superiority of its morality.

If we ask what were the reasons for the special place which Judaism was destined to occupy as a force in religious history, even as Greece be-

came a force in the development of art, or Rome in the region of law, we shall find these reasons in two facts. The first is in that consistently spiritual attitude which, in spite of the defection of the many, kept the soul of the nation ever looking towards God. The story of Jacob is the historical illustration of how the Jew, carnal and material as his natural appetites might be, trickster and mean as he might be by inclination, struggles on, until by wrestling, as it were with God Himself, he wins his new nature and the new name which is its sign and reward. The second is that intensity of moral earnestness, amounting sometimes almost to ferocity and fanaticism, which insisted upon the moralization of life's experience.

Of course, it is obvious that not all Israel was of Israel. The Israel related to the "old clo' man" was often triumphant over the Israel related to the Evangelical Prophet. As a living Jewish poet, Israel Zangwill, says:

"Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, the Lord, our God, is One,
But we, Jehovah, His people, are dual and so undone."

Yet, after all, it was the faith of the nation which determined its religious experience, and though "the remnant" dwindled and dwindled till the "Servant of Yahweh" became an Ideal Person, yet of that Ideal it was still true:

"Wheresoe'er a Jew dwelt there dwelt Truth,
And wheresoe'er a Jew was there was Light,
And wheresoe'er a Jew went there went Love."

Having recalled to ourselves then the fact that the Jew was called to be God's apostle, just as the first Christian apostles were called by the Lake of Galilee, not for what they knew, or were, or could do, but because of what they were capable of becoming, and knowing, and achieving, let us now see what that selfsame Jew did with the primitive conceptions of religion he received from his environment.

We see him at first a sharer in the limitations of his neighbors. He has the same inadequate conception of *God,* Who is to him what He was to the heathen, a vaguely personal aggregation of "powers" which they called *Elohim.* He has the same limited conception of ethics. It is still credible that God may demand the actual slaying of a son in sacrifice, and there is little in the way of injury which it is unlawful to inflict upon the alien. He has, again, the same limited conception of *society,* which is, for all the purposes of social morality, as hinted above, confined to the family or clan. "The stranger within thy gate" is only accepted when he comes, separated from his own tribe, to throw himself upon the hospitality of the camp. He has, lastly, the same faint perception of the *future life,* since the "gathering to the fathers" is, as in the case of the pagan Semites, the union of the spirit with the spirits of the dead in some dim, shadowy simulacrum of the camp beneath the soil.

From such a beginning, which touches at all

points the religious condition of most primitive peoples, let us enumerate roughly the steps along the upward way.

If we think of the spiritual attitude and the moral earnestness of the potential "Servant," the qualities which at the outset give direction and force to the chosen instrument, as illustrated in the person of Abraham, we may take it that the first great revolutionary change which registers progress is to be associated with the leadership of the great law-giver Moses.

In this instance, as commonly in the history of religion, personality plays its important part. The story bears in its every incident the evidence of how the leader carried the laggard people through the wilderness like the true shepherd who feels himself charged with the dead weight of a generally reluctant flock. But there were, nevertheless, other elements in the situation making for religious advance.

The bondage in Egypt, with some intellectual gains, had created a revulsion against the ideals of the old Egyptian religion, even as the experience of Abraham, with whatever gains it likewise had been associated, had provoked revulsion against the civilization of Babylon. Further, the loftier monolatry of Midian, with its more personally conceived god of storm and war, Yahweh, had introduced a new element into the religion of Israel, or had re-emphasized one which had been previously local and limited.

The recognition of an adoption by the mountain God of Sinai, defective as the conception may appear to modern theology, marked an immense advance beyond the worship of the *Elohim*. There was something more personal, more anthropomorphic, something at once tenderer and more passionately concerned, than anything they had had before. To be taken up by Yahweh, led and sustained, championed and fought for, even punished and afflicted, brought about a new idea of the relation between God and mankind. To go back to Canaan behind the standard of such a deity was the very urge they needed to rise to a sterner view of the moral values, and so launch a holy war against the idolatrous naturalism of those whose rites, as agriculturists, seemed abominable in the eyes of the desert dwellers. In brief, the word "holiness" was in process of taking on new and more transcendent meaning.

For a while, under the conditions of the new life, it was a struggle to the death, the nomad against the settled folk, *Yahweh* against the *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth,* moral ideals against the licentious rites which, on the lines of imitative magic, were supposed to stimulate the reproductive powers of the soil.

In this struggle, the general tendency of the masses and their rulers was to assimilate themselves in belief and practice to the older habits of the land. But the vital force of religion, what one might call "the law of vital procedure," that

"tendency towards perfection" by which life ever shapes itself towards better things, shows itself in the rise of the prophetic order. Few more striking illustrations of evolution in a religious organism are to be found than the way in which the *shaman,* or medicine man, is enabled to lend himself to the divine uses, until he becomes the spokesman for God of the highest religious truths. Beginning as the mere clairvoyant minister to the secular necessities of a village community, uncouthly clad, eccentric in conduct, emotionally controlled and affected by music, used as a finder of lost cattle and the like, we see the prophet in Israel gradually transformed, through right spiritual attitude and intensity of moral earnestness, into the prophet as we see him in the pages of Isaiah or Jeremiah.

Thenceforth there is no great crisis in Hebrew history which is without its prophetic interpretation, an interpretation, moreover, which has significance for all ages and for all the world.

From the struggle between the entrenched forces of the older naturalism and the new Yahwism we come to the interpretation of the Assyrian menace of the 8th century B. C., which the prophets were the first to perceive and the first to understand. *Amos,* the wool-grower of Tekoa, brought into contact with world politics in the cities to which he takes his wool, and brooding over those politics in his pastures and among his fig-trees, becomes convinced of an over-ruling

Power to whom all the nations are subject, about to break in upon the fancied security of Israel with judgment. *Hosea,* the poet-prophet of Galilee, out of his own experience of love and grief, and out of a love which survives in spite of grief, adds to the announcement of judgment the doctrine of the Divine Love which uses judgment as part of the educative discipline which shall purify and redeem. *Isaiah* and *Micah* bear their witness in the southern kingdom, shaken as that kingdom is by the downfall of the northern capital. Isaiah's emphasis is upon the assurance of the Divine Presence which makes Jerusalem safe, even though surrounded by the confident truculence of the hitherto victorious adversary. Micah is chiefly concerned, in the light of that some passage of the Assyrian through the land, with the need of social penitence and revival of faith.

Then *Zephaniah* scents from afar the terror of the Scythian, and proclaims the advent of that *Day of Yahweh* which colored for all time to come the visions of apocalypse. *Nahum* raises his voice in the taunt songs which at once hail and anticipate the downfall of the "bloody city" of Nineveh which has so long tyrannized over the surrounding states.

Then—a new step for prophecy—*Habakkuk,* "the first sceptic" in Israel, goes to his lonely watch-tower to fight out the battle of faith, though truth apparently were slain in the midst of the street. Suppose, he asks, Isaiah's optimism to be

ill-founded, and the assault of the Chaldaean to succeed where the Assyrian had failed, what is to be the relation between the soul and God? So the prophet wrings out of hostile circumstances the sublime affirmation which strengthened religion for all time, that the life of the just man is still bound up with fidelity to Yahweh.

After this we have the two great prophets of the captivity epoch whose doom it was to look upon and explain to a depressed age the anticipated calamity. *Jeremiah,* in the unpopular *rôle* of one who knows the captivity to be inevitable, must vindicate faith in the national God through a time of national disaster and be himself an illustration of that faith and of the power of suffering to be serviceable. *Ezekiel,* among the captives by the canal Chebar, must, far off from the fatal scene, endure, for himself and others, the shock and reverberation of Jerusalem's fall; then he must brace himself to the vision and task of reconstruction.

Then, a happier lot, with the capture of Babylon by the Achaemenian, we have with us the *Evangelical Prophet,* singing in inspired strain the return of the remnant, making monotheism secure for the ages to come, and proclaiming, as no other voice has ever done, the heartening mission to which the Servant people had been called in the providence of God.

Sordid years elapse, years of disillusion and apparent failure. Is any revival of nationalism pos-

sible, or is Israel's mission something grander than a nation may achieve? So the old man *Haggai* appears to proclaim the future glories of Judaism in her ministry to the world, and the young man *Zechariah* explains his visions to reassure men as to the validity of the worship and witness of religion.

The double mission of Judaism begins to be made clear: first, the mission to condense, concentrate, hold, and defend to the death; secondly, the mission to distribute and transmit, this too even to the death of most that the Jew held dear.

The centripetal aspect of the mission of Judaism has given us the Law, the Temple, the Priesthood, the Sacrificial system. It has given us that wonderful pentagonal idea of *Holiness*, as represented in the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, in which the holiness of all *Mankind* is represented by the High Priest, the holiness of all *Time* by the symbolism of the Day itself, the holiness of all *Space* by the symbolism of the Holy of Holies, the holiness of all *Matter* by the symbolism of the Sacrificial Blood, and the holiness of all *Acts* by the Sprinkling of the Blood upon the Mercy Seat. It was as though the whole religious system of the Jew were an intensification by specialized emphasis in the five regions of Person, Time, Space, Matter, and Act, which might enable the conception to flow back upon the world with redeeming result. Thus all men should become priests, every day a day in which God and Man

would be at one, all space filled with the glory of God, even the bells upon the horses become holy to Yahweh, and every act be reckoned as high service at the altar of God.

The centrifugal aspect of the mission of Judaism thus takes on meaning from the significance of the centripetal. As there was a mission to conserve and protect, so there was a mission to disperse. The nationality so passionately, even fiercely, emphasized in a book like *Esther,* the Jew must be prepared to cast into the crucible, in order that he may celebrate, as in books like *Ruth* and *Jonah,* the place of the Gentile in the good purposes of God.

Hence a new era in the history of Judaism opens up to show the chosen people no longer the little, pent-up, struggling nationality, striving to maintain a precarious foothold on the narrow isthmus between Asia and Africa, but now at last a world-wide influence spreading out from Alexandria, receiving and giving the treasures which God had appointed for her to receive and give. Of what she received during this critically significant epoch we must think in another chapter. What she was inspired to contribute must be summed up in a few sentences. As the prophet had been inspired to touch the moral conscience of mankind, and as the priest had been led to organize ritually the symbolism of religion, so now the Sage was employed to be God's instrument for making and keeping touch with the wisdom of the nations and

for speaking to the nations in a tongue easy to be understood. So too came the new language of Israel to the world in the Greek into which the sacred scriptures were translated. Such facts are, of course, among the evidences of the coming of that "fulness of time" when it would be the part of the Jew, at the sacrifice of himself, to quench the torch of his own national life, in order to pass on a brighter light to the Gentile world.

But, ere we arrive at this point, it is necessary to note that the two more or less contemporaneous aspects of Jewish religion, the one with its centre at Jerusalem, the other at Alexandria, contradictory as they sometimes seem in their literature and in their attitude to life, were yet working together towards the giving to the world another gift of tremendous importance for the cause of world religion.

This is a new sense of the largeness of life. Both the sage at Alexandria and the martyr at Jerusalem under the stress of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, had come to recognize the falsity of the old philosophy which made all divine favor, to nation or to individual, measurable by the degree of material prosperity enjoyed. It was now necessary to transcend the old philosophy of the Deuteronomic Code, as it applied to the nation, and to transcend no less the doctrine of Ezekiel, as applying to the individual, that justice was invariably meted out by a "Judge of all the earth" Who "doeth right" within the space of

three score and ten mortal years. The problem is faced by some of the Psalmists and particularly in the Book of Job, and, while no certain conviction was possible to the Old Testament mind, light was glimpsed in two directions. On the one hand, Job's demand for a God akin to himself in sympathy and in a common sense of right and wrong, became the link which made all the earlier anthropomorphic elements of religion predictive of fulfilment in the fact of the Incarnation. And, on the other hand, the thought of the Divine kinship made thinkable the sharing of the Divine life beyond the grave, and gathered up all the old intuitions of primitive men, as preserved in various forms of spiritism and necromancy,—intuitions which had been long suppressed by Yahwism as, by themselves, without moral fruit—into one great conviction as to a quality of life which it would be joy to possess evermore.

Under the stimulus of hopes such as these it was possible for the Jew, out of the very furnace of his affliction, to see, through the fervid eyes of the apocalyptist, the triumph of that kingdom of God which was at once Theophany and Theodicy, the world wide rule of righteousness and the reign of the righteous God in partnership and kinship with mankind.

In such a development as we have thus briefly sketched, what are the special elements of religious truth which Judaism has gathered out of the chaotic beliefs and practices of primitive man

to lay at the feet of a world waiting for the full revelation of God?

We must summarize them briefly as follows:

1. There is clear advance made towards an adequate conception of *God*. We see the tribal idea of God, not far removed from animism, displaced by the more anthropomorphically conceived Yahweh, war-god and champion of tribes now welded into nationality. Satisfaction with a national divinity eventually gives way to the larger vision of a God Who belongs alike to the Ethiopian and to Israel, a God Who has been concerned with the exodus of the Philistines from Caphtor as well as with that of the Israelites from Egypt. From Amos onward, the feeling grows, until the henotheism of the national stage is superseded by the genuine monotheism of the second Isaiah, the proclamation of a God Whose dominion is universal and absolute, and beside Whom is no other.

2. There is a corresponding development of the conception of the *Church* or of Society. In the beginning the elect element was the tribe alone, and outside was a humanity always alien and generally hostile. The necessities of defence against the tribes of Canaan, and of loyalty to Yahweh Who had adopted them as His people, enabled Israel to create the monarchy, centralized at Jerusalem, and to maintain its integrity until its peculiar task had been accomplished. The patriotism which was thus engendered has furnished the world with a still living symbolism, and "Jer-

usalem" remains still to the spirit something beyond the power of speech or imagination to express adequately.

But the Jew learned, even before the tragedy came which dissolved the nation—with Edith Cavell—that there is something greater than patriotism. When the triple bond of God, Land, and People was so rudely severed, just as the idea of God, instead of perishing, rose to nobler proportions, so the ideas of Land and People, with the aid of an inspired symbolism, became ever vaster and more wonderful. What a communion became possible to those who had eyes to see all the nations of the earth bowed before a common God and engaged in a common service! What a Zion rose before the vision of men as they thought of the Gentile taking hold of the skirts of the Jew, demanding participation in the privileges of a common faith! Gradually all those elements of humanity which had been as it were eliminated while the specialization of the function of Israel was in process, are seen to be coming back in order that they may enjoy the fruits of that specialization. The "chosen" people is indeed chosen, not for the enjoyment of selfish splendor, but in order that it may become "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

3. In the third place, continuously with the expansion of the idea of the national into the human, we see the development of the sense of the *individual.* The failure of the old philosophy of material

reward for religious fidelity, to which we alluded above, led necessarily to discrimination within the nation between those who kept and those who violated the law of God. Surely justice must dictate the recognition of some other principle beside that of the solidarity of the family or tribe. It could not be fair that forever the fathers would eat sour grapes and that the children's teeth should be set on edge. Solemn as was the certainty that evil consequences did follow the evil doer even to the third and fourth generation, there must be another side. This other side, first announced by Jeremiah, is formulated by Ezekiel in the famous words: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." With the enunciation of this great truth, there opened upon the world possibilities of personal religion and personal freedom of which earlier generations had not dreamed. As there was a world outside the nation which was under the direction of the Spirit of God, so also within the nation was, as it were, a microcosm, in which, equally as in Jerusalem, God could set up His Throne. By and by it would come to pass that a truer nationalism would find a place for a true individualism, even as nationalism itself would have found for it an abiding place in the true internationalism of the Kingdom, when "the glory of the nations" should enter within the open gates of the City of God.

4. Fourthly, Judaism brought to birth, in the train of the prophetic teaching as to the signifi-

cance of individualism, a larger conception of *life* itself. As we have seen, the teaching of Ezekiel that God rewarded or punished the actions of individual men, for a while sufficed. In many of the circumstances of the normal life it did actually appear that it paid to be pious. "I have been young, and now am old," said the Psalmist, "yet never saw I the righteous forsaken or his seed begging their bread." Yet circumstances soon revealed themselves as frequently in contradiction to so optimistic a creed. Another Psalmist, frankly perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked, declares: "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." The great poem of Job, as we have pointed out, took up the subject with great boldness, even with an audacity which seemed to some akin to blasphemy, carrying opposition to the traditional orthodoxy up to argument with God Himself. The solution, only faintly glimpsed in the poem, in course of time began to grow clearer. If life is to be justly judged, the judgment must take cognisance of a larger conception of life than one confined to the thought of life in this present body. So the old views as to the survival of the soul, which had been suppressed in the interest of practical morality, now return charged with a new significance. "The glory of going on and still to be" becomes credible if man is to have some share in the life of the Eternal. In such a case, a theodicy may be hoped for such as shall not outrage the sense of

justice in the martyr who lays down his life for the sake of the truth.

"Only grant my soul may carry high through life her cup unspilled,
Brimming though it be with knowledge, life's loss drop by drop distilled,
I shall boast it mine, the balsam, bless each kindly wrench that wrung
From life's tree its inmost virtue, tapped the root whence pleasure sprung,
Barked the bole, and broke the bough, and bruised the berry, left all grace
Ashes in death's stern alembic, loosed elixir in its place."

5. Fifthly, all these enlarged conceptions of God, of Society, of the worth of the Individual, and of the largeness of Life, meet in the comprehensive doctrine of the later Judaism as to the *Coming of God* in the Person of His Anointed to judge the world, for the avenging of wrong-doing and for the establishment of the Divine Kingdom.

The Apocalyptic dreams nourished in the Essene communities and elsewhere during the last two centuries of the Old Testament dispensation, bring to a focal point not merely the hope of Israel but also "the desirable things of the nations" which it was the mission of Judaism to clarify and interpret.

There were, of course, pagan throwbacks not a few, revivals of old dreams of a restored nation with its secular monarchy. There were manifold differences and inconsistencies in the visions re-

ceived and proclaimed. Some looked for a kingdom both of and in the world; others had their eyes lifted beyond the grave and the resurrection of the dead.

But the essence of the hope in all was the same, however crude the terms in which that hope was clothed. Men knew that God was drawing near to give answer to the universal yearning. They knew that out of that shaking of heaven and earth which His appearing must bring about, there would dawn the beginning of a new and better day. As in their own experience the veil had been taken away from many of the things in which the heathen believed concerning God and human life, so a new rending of the veil was about to come, and beyond it a new revelation of God. The old primitive world together with the Jewish world—*David cum Sibylla*—are ready to join in one sublime acclamation:

"Say among the nations, The Lord reigneth:
The world also is stablished that it cannot be moved:
He shall judge the people with equity.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof;
Let the field exult and all that is therein;
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy
Before the Lord, for He cometh;
For He cometh to judge the earth."

6. One last point. In closing the chapter on Primitive Religion I pointed out that the primitive world could not escape contact with the

method of the *Cross*. "Without shedding of blood" there was not only no remission of sins, but also little entrance into any of the privileges of life.

So it was in the case of the Jew. In a sense never intended by the utterers, the words, "His blood be on us and on our children," have proved true, not for hurt but for healing. In a very real sense the best power of the Jew has come from his sharing the Cross with Him Whom the rulers rejected and blasphemed. The victims of the "Ghetto's plague" and the Inquisition might well plead:

> "Thou! if thou wast he, who at midnight came,
> By the star-light, naming a dubious name!
> And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash
> With fear—O thou, if that martyr gash
> Fell on thee coming to take thy own,
> And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—
> Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.
> But the Judgment over, join sides with us!
> Thine too is the cause."

Yes, reflecting its light back over the martyrs of Judaism who perished under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, and long before as long after, we see that the "stumbling block of the Cross" was the essential method accepted for the shaping of the Servant People, as it was for the Ideal Servant Who came to represent them and all the ignorant ages before them.

The best way of finishing this chapter is along the line of this particular thought. Let me quote

a passage from the Jewish poetess, Emma Lazarus, which expresses what I have tried to say:

"Day long I brooded upon the Passion of Israel.
I saw him bound to the wheel, nailed to the cross, cut off by the sword, burned at the stake, tossed into the seas.
And always the same patient, resolute martyr face arose in silent rebuke and defiance.
A Prophet with four eyes; wide gazed the orbs of the spirit above the sleeping eyelids of the senses.
A Poet, who plucked from his bosom the quivering heart and fashioned it into a lyre.
A placid-browed Sage, uplifted from earth in celestial meditation.
These I saw, with prince and people in their train; the monumental dead and the standard-bearers of the future.
And suddenly I heard a burst of mocking laughter; and, turning, I beheld the shuffling gait, the ignominious features, the sordid mask of the son of the Ghetto.
Turn again, O daughter of Israel, my sister, and behold, with divinely awakened eyes the son of man, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Who has ever spoken words so tender and close, so fulfilled of the brotherhood of man? 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.'
Be ye then uplifted, ye who would uplift. Ye who come in his name and yet deny him, with Christ on your lips but with hatred and scorn in your hearts, behold the suffering child of God, your brother; behold our divine humanity crushed beneath the burden of the flesh, the sins and sorrows of the world!
Ye who would bear witness to his spirit and his truth, to the Christ that is within you, look with the eyes

of Christ, the heart of Christ; pierce with illuminated vision the hollow mask; let the warm rays, the gentle touch of love, fall upon the dull clod of clay and awake the sleeping soul, the higher, the divine self, that slumbers in every child of earth, every one of God's creatures,—the Christ that is to be, when all men know themselves as he knew, one with the Father and one with his fellowmen."

# CHAPTER IV

## GIFTS AT THE CHRIST CRADLE

"I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy,
—To seek which, the joy hunger forces us:
That stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make prized the life at large—
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there, as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and alas,
He must have done so, were it possible."

—Browning, *Cleon.*

### SYNOPSIS

"The glory of the nations" brought to the Cradle as well as to the Cross—the coming of the Magi—not only a prophecy—but also a history—the religions of the world, as related to Judaism, of three types—first, the primitive religions already dealt with—secondly, the ethnic religions brought into historic contact with Judaism—thirdly, the religions of the East only indirectly related.

This chapter to deal with the second type—what did Babylon contribute to Judaism?—the victory of light over darkness—Marduk and Tiamât—the significance of Ziggurat worship—the germ of Messianic doctrine in the

*patesi*—the quest for immortality—the law code of Hammurabi—the moral ideals of Babylon.

The contribution of Egypt—the desire for renewed life—justification through Osiris—the advancing conception of God to the monolatry of Ikhnatun.

The contribution of Persia—"Cyrus, My Anointed"—the Persian angelology—Ahuramazda, Spirit, Light, Wisdom, Righteousness—the law of righteousness—"Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds"—the Judgment and the future life—the *Patet Erani.*

The gift of Greece—the ideals of Hellenism—the Hellenism in Christianity—the Greek language—the Septuagint—the evolutionary element in Greek theology—the Mysteries and the doctrine of the future life—the moral teaching of the Greek—Socrates as witness for Christ—"Lead thou me on, O Zeus."

The gift of Rome—the gift of the catholic idea—the reign of universal law—the vision of world peace—how Rome became Babylon—yet still an ideal—Zola's dream of a "third Rome."

ALLUSION was made in our last chapter to that glowing vision of the New Testament Apocalyptist in which appears the perfect four-square city which represents the kingdom of redeemed humanity. Through the open gates of that City of God which is also the City of Man, enter from every point of the compass "the glory of the nations."

In this picture we have the prophecy of that final universality which we have claimed as the consummation of the Christian religion, the universality which is to be as rich and harmonious as the potentialities of national and individual life. That the ultimate religion which is to lay

claim to the allegiance of men must be of this character has been our assumption from the start and to it we shall return again and again.

But at this point it is important to note something else, namely, that the glory of the nations is brought to the cradle of the universal faith as well as to its triumph and its throne.

This is the significance of that beautiful story of Leading, Seeking, and Finding which tells of the coming of the Magi to pay their adoration at the cradle of the Christ at Bethlehem.

The author of the first Gospel was a Jew, and throughout intensely conscious of the part played by the Jew in the preparation for the Kingdom. Hence it is all the more significant that it is S. Matthew, and he alone, who introduces this story of the coming of the Wise Men to greet with gifts the new-born King.

From the first century onward the imagination of artist and poet lent itself freely to the embroidery of the story with fanciful details as to the number, nationality, and name of these mysterious visitors to Bethlehem.

It was felt to be the prophecy of the final satisfaction all were to find in the coming of the Christ. "Then are they glad because they are at rest, and so He bringeth them to the haven where they would be." As Gilbert Chesterton puts it:

"The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand

Than the square stones of Rome . . . .
To an open house at evening
Home shall all men come,
To an older place than Eden,
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star . . .
(Where) all men are at home."

But the story is more than prophecy; it is the gathering up of a great historical fact. Neither the sober commentator on the story nor the imaginative interpreter of the story has seemed really conscious of the full import of this significant aspect. That we have here the prediction of the part that East and West are to play in perfecting the glory of the established kingdom is conceded, but the emphasizing of the fact that Gentile as well as Jew had their homage to pay and their contribution to make at the very founding of the Kingdom has been rare and slight. Yet, through the Magi in this old story, whatever may be its historic value, we are enabled to see the religions of the world claiming their right to share with the Jew in the epiphany of the Christ.

Thus, as it was open to the symbolists of old to describe the Wise Men as the representatives of Europe, Asia, and Africa, so it is open to the modern poet, in *The Light of the World,* to represent them as "three travelled Masters" from India bearing—

"Red gold from Indian rocks, cunningly beat
To plate and chalice, with old fables sweet
Of Buddha's compassion."

So, moreover, it is meet to give them still larger significance, as we do here, namely, as the representatives of the faith of all who—

> "Rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not deem it was a dream."

At the beginning of the last chapter I spoke of the Hebrew Scriptures as forming an Old Testament in a somewhat specialized sense, because of the special part designed by Providence to be played by Israel, for geographical and historical reasons, and because of the special concern of those scriptures with the lineage of the Christ.

We claimed, nevertheless, the use of the Hebrew Old Testament as furnishing an example of the way in which other literatures and other histories may be interpreted in order to make sacred what else might have been deemed secular and profane. To this aspect of the subject we must now return. Our task is to ask what was the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that the older world brought to the Christ cradle.

We may relate these older religions to Christianity through the mediating Judaism under three different heads, in the order of their relative proximity:

1. There are the primitive religions, present, as we have seen, in the sources of the religion of Israel. Those with which we have dealt have been Semitic, but they are, nevertheless, typical of primitive religion the world over, and express

similar ideas in theology, even as they gave rise to similar practices and institutions.

2. In the next place are the religions of a more definitely ethnic character, which made their contributions to the religion of the Jew in the course of Hebrew history, much as tributaries feed the main stream of a river. Such are the religions of Babylon, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

3. Lastly, there are the religions which at no time came into anything but the most indirect relation with Judaism, but which must nevertheless be interpreted by the key placed in our hands when we understand the relation of the Hebrew Old Testament to the New Testament of the Christian dispensation. Such, we shall see, are the religions of China and India.

To the religious conceptions of the first class we have already, though with necessary brevity, paid some attention. In this chapter we must treat of the second class of religions, before we attempt to show Christianity as the answer to Jew and Gentile alike.

In the religion of *Babylon* there were many elements which were crude and dark and repellent, elements which because of their crudeness were necessarily regarded by the Jew as among the "beggarly elements" to be rejected and discarded. The "crude procedures of savage sorcerers" were indeed so prominent that in a ritualized form some of them have established a kind of black art reaching down to our own time. Yet on the other

hand there were from the earliest Sumerian and Babylonian ages germs of vital religious truths which it was the mission of Judaism to accept, preserve, and develop. The chief of these are as follows:

i. The history of the world is represented as a struggle between the forces of light and darkness, with victory resting ultimately with the light. However physical may be the materials of this marvellous duel, dramatized as it may have been from the observed struggle between the sea and the land at the head of the Persian gulf, it is plain that the conflict between Marduk and the monster Tiamât furnished material for conceiving the apocalyptic war between light and darkness, good and evil, which was to have immense spiritual result.

ii. In the Babylonian ziggurat worship, with its effort to reach the dwelling place of the gods by means of the temple towers divided into the planetary spheres, there was symbolised, first, the possibility of God descending to communion with mortal men, and, secondly, the possibility of men ascending to communion with God. Crude as was the imagining which placed the dwelling-place of deity on a mountain height, or, in default of the mountain, at the top of some man-built tower, it had in it the germ of all subsequent pictures of the City of God, with its twelve courses of varicolored precious stones, within which God might dwell, and man in the presence

of God. Whatever half-way errors the idea contained, such as we associate with the Gnostic theories of emanations, aeons, and the like, it was an idea most precious and significant for the future of religion. In that topmost chamber where a priestess resided who was regarded as "the spouse of God," we find the first intuition of humanity as to that relation to be established between God and man accepted in the New Testament as the relation between the Lamb and the Bride. It is a picture of the redeemed society in which "the King woos His glorious Queen"; it is, moreover, a picture of the human heart prepared to be the dwelling place of "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," the Bridechamber of the soul:—

> "The hold that falls not when the town is got,
> The heart's heart, whose immured plot
> Hath keys yourself keep not.—
> Its keys are at the cincture hung of God;
> Its gates are trepidant to His nod;
> By Him its floors are trod."

iii. In the divine rulership through the *patesi*, or priest-king (cf. Melchizedek in Gen. xiv), represented as the son of the god, we have the earliest germ of the Messianic doctrine. Without human father or mother, "a priest for ever," the *patesi* is the "shepherd"; he is, almost in the language of Isaiah (ix 6), "exalted king, chief counselor, the subduer, princely leader, great lord."

iv. In the already commenced quest for immor-

tality we have an element of religion which leads right on to the satisfaction of that quest in Christ. The words of Sabitu to Gilgamesh:—

"When the gods created mankind
They fixed death for mankind.
Life they retained in their own hands.
O Gilgamesh, let thy belly be filled,
Day and night be merry, daily arrange a merry-making.
Day and night be joyous and contented,
Let thy garments be pure, thy head be washed.
Wash thyself with water.
Regard the little one who takes hold of thy hand,
Enjoy the wife lying in thy bosom"—

are as little final to the hero of the Babylonian epic as are the similar words of Ecclesiastes (ix 7-9) to the Jew. The mention of the water of life whereby Ishtar is restored by Namtu, the very failure of Gilgamesh to retain the plant of immortality which Utnapishtim enables him to discover, or to raise up more than the ghost of his friend Engidu, represent the seriousness of this age-long quest. Moreover, the seasonal myth, in the form of the story of Tammuz and Ishtar, made Nature partner with man in demanding on the part of religion faith in more abundant life. And the bitter regrets of Adapa for his failure to receive the proffered "bread of life" and "drink of life" at the hand of the gods emphasizes the same important truth.

v. The Laws of Hammurabi, resting as they do upon codes and traditions long anterior even to the first Babylonian dynasty, must be regarded as

part of that revelation of law which we rightly call divine, a revelation given from Shamash as well as from Yahweh, and in both cases preparatory to the diviner law of Christ, written not on "tables of stone" but on "the fleshy tables of the heart."

vi. Lastly, the moral and spiritual aspiration, expressing itself in prayer and in hymns of penitence, or in such phrases as the following:

> "Daily approach thy God
> With offering and prayer as an excellent incense;
> Before thy God come with a pure heart,"

show men already on the rungs of that ladder of sunbeams which slopes through darkness up to God.

Yet all the might of Babylon was not great enough, apart from the help of the Jew, to bring these hints and anticipations of universal religion to present them at the cradle of the Christ.

2. The case of *Egypt* is not unlike that of Babylon. The bondage of Egypt did not dispose the captive tribes to fall in love with the religion of their masters. There were, moreover, survivals of totemism in the animal worship of Egypt which Israel had outgrown, though some of the tribes still bore the old animal standards which may have had a similar origin.

Yet there was much in the religion of Egypt which was bound to be appreciated and which entered more or less unconsciously into the faith carried away by Israel to Canaan.

i. In spite of the provision made for the dead, Egyptian religion was concerned as much as any other with life. The kings of Egypt were not content to "lie with the Pyramids over their head" in long and dreamless sleep. They loved life so much that they were ready to fight their way into the immortality of the blessed gods. Some of the oldest inscriptions of Egypt, namely, the famous *Pyramids Texts* of the 5th Dynasty (2625 B. C.), represent the kings as "bluffing" their way into life by boasting of their unimaginable might. So again we find the Babylonian seasonal myth of Tammuz and Ishtar paralleled with that of Osiris and Isis. There is infinite pathos in the cry which was the annual Easter anthem of the Egyptian: "He wakes, Osiris wakes, the weary god awakes and stands; he controls his body again. Stand up, thou shalt not end; thou shalt not perish."

ii. Secondly, the risen Osiris becomes, as in the ritual of *The Book of the Dead,* the means of justification for the penitent sinner, so that the justified one, with his new name, *Osiris N. or M.,* may pass on to joy in the presence of the gods. The very fact that the future life, in contradistinction to that of the early Semites, is here moralized, shows that Egypt had some gift to render.

iii. Thirdly, the conception of God with the Egyptian was one which might readily march on with the developments we have already sketched, until it was capable of bearing witness to the the-

ology of the Christian. Beginning with local, possibly totemistic, gods, transforming these into a divine hierarchy with the federation of the city states and the union of Upper and Lower Egypt, Egyptian theology gradually centres itself in the Sun-god Amên or Rê, as the case might be, at Thebes or Memphis, till a final step is attempted by the idealist Ikhnatun, with his proclamation of Atun, god of the solar disk, as the one true deity. How nearly the witness of the Egyptian rose to the heights attained by the Hebrew may be seen if we compare with the 104th Psalm that glorious hymn of Atun from which I must only quote a paragraph:

"Creator of the germ and maker of the seed,
Thou givest life to the son in the body of the mother,
Soothing him that he may not weep,
Nursing him in the womb,
Giving breath to animate all.
When in the shell the fledgling chirps in the egg,
Thou givest him breath to preserve him alive,
And when Thou hast brought him to burst the shell,
Then cometh he forth from the egg to chirp with all his might.
Manifold are Thy works, sole God, whose power none other possesseth."

One might easily dwell upon other elements of Egyptian religion which it was important that the Jew should not forget, but the above hints must suffice.

3. The debt of Hebrew religion to the faith of *Persia* is large and more direct than in the cases

already mentioned. It is obvious that the Judaism which acknowledged a Persian monarch as "the anointed of Yahweh" for the accomplishment of the deliverance from Babylon, and whose destiny it was to live for two centuries under the government of Zoroastrian kings, must inevitably absorb from Persia some elements of the national religion. Reference needs only to be made to such matters as the Zoroastrian system of angelology, with its "holy immortal ones," the Amshaspands, who become for the Jew "the Seven Spirits of God," or with its "guardian angels" for the nations (as in Daniel) and for individuals (as in the New Testament).

But there are elements of greater importance.

i. The God of the Zoroastrian is no longer, as in the Veda, a Nature god. He is Spirit, He is Light, He is Wisdom, and He is Righteousness. Behind all spiritual powers is Asha, the law of righteousness, and Ahuramazda is eternally opposed to Angra-mainyu, the Lie, the Counterworker, who must finally be defeated, by the help of man.

ii. Thus religion is on the side of Light and Right. It is a moral choice. "The Will of the Lord is the Law of Righteousness." Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds,—these make up the life of the believer here and these meet him hereafter in lovely guise.

iii. The doctrine of the future life is, even more than in the case of Egypt, moralized. For the

good is reserved the blessedness of Paradise (the word carries with it the story of its origin); for the evil Hell gapes with unimaginable horror.

iv. What else there may be of the ancient faith of Zoroaster to be carried over, fully developed, into the religion of mankind, may be gathered from the language of its Creed, the *Patet Erani*:

"I believe in the good faith. I believe in the coming Resurrection, in the later body, in the passage of the Bridge of Judgment, in a future recompense of good deeds, and in the punishment hereafter of evil deeds; in the perpetual state of Paradise for the good and in the annihilation of hell, of the Evil One, and of all the evil demons. I believe that Ormuzd will at last be victorious, and that Ahriman will perish, together with all the offshoots of darkness. All that I ought to have thought and have not thought, all that I ought to have said and have not said, all that I ought to have done and have not done, all that I ought to have commanded others to do and have not commanded, and all that I ought not to have thought and yet have thought, and all that I ought not to have said and yet have said, all that I ought not to have done and yet have done, all that I ought not to have commanded and yet have commanded, —for every thought, word, and deed, whether of the body or of the spirit, whether of earth or of heaven, I pray for forgiveness and repent of every sin with this Patet."

Surely those who have supposed that of the Wise Men who came to Bethlehem at least one was a disciple of Zoroaster have not greatly erred.

4. What are we to say of the gift of *Greece?* Greeks, we are told, came desirous to see Christ before His Passion. No less certainly does Greece bring her gifts to the Cradle. It would take a

volume instead of a paragraph or two to do justice to this fact.

i. There is first the ideal itself of the true Greece. Hellenism has often enough been set over against Hebraism as an antithesis,—"the vine-wreathed god" over against the God "with a crown of thorns." There is no such necessary antithesis. The Greek ideal of beauty is not inevitably limited by that preoccupation with the carnal which was its degradation and its parody. Indeed the Greek ideal was needed to yield that sense of the perfection of goodness which is suggested by the character of Christ. The perfect man is not only *agathos* (good) but *kalos* (beautiful); such is the implication of the term "Good (*kalos*) Shepherd" applied by Christ to Himself. "The beauty that endures upon the spiritual height" is the necessary crown for that goodness which has reached perfection, and the proper correction for that stern and puritanic conception of morals which the Jew retained from his wilderness experience and from his struggle with the corruptions of Canaan. For the true Greek there was no divorce decreed between the Beautiful and the Good, for, in the words of Plato, "It is the clear view of truth, the possession of eternal beauty, the contemplation of absolute good, which makes up the life of the just and happy." Thus, although there were times in Christian history when Puritanism was justified by way of revolt from the animalism of a degraded art, yet, from the "cot-

tage in the vale" to which she had for a time retired, Beauty continued to make her plea:

> "Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
> So lightly, beautifully built;
> Perchance I may return with others there,
> When I have purged my guilt."

ii. In the second place, Greece put at the service of universal religion her superb language, one of the three tongues in which the kingship of Christ was to be proclaimed from the Cross, and the tongue in which the preparation for that proclamation by prophets and psalmists was to be made intelligible to the world. As Dean Stanley puts it (*Jewish Church,* III, 228): "It was the Septuagint which was the Bible of the Evangelists and Apostles in the first century, and of the Christian Church for the first age of its existence, which is still the only recognized authorized text of the Eastern Church, and the basis of the only authorized text of the Latin Church." "If 'the noble army of translators,' as they have been sometimes called, may look with affectionate veneration on Jerome's cell at Bethlehem, on Luther's study in the Castle of the Wartburg, on the Jerusalem chamber, where once and again the majestic language of the English Bible has been revised, yet the goal of their most sacred pilgrimage should be the narrow, rocky islet of the Alexandrian harbor, where was kindled a brighter and more enduring beacon in the intellectual and religious sphere even than the world-renowned

Pharos, which in the maritime world has been the parent of all the lights that from shore to shore and sea to sea have guided the mariners for two thousand years."

iii. But Greece had also much to give out of her own evolutionary experience in religion. She too had had the divine leading. Only a little way beneath the beautiful form of the classic myths are concealed grossnesses, savageries, crudenesses, such as mark her own first contacts with the primitive. It was out of an intermingling of the primitive, the Minoan, and the Indo-European that she arrived at the point where an apostle himself might appeal to her testimony in support of his message. Above all the creation of polytheistic imagination there was a sense of God to whom S. Paul could point as One Who, although unknown, is yet the Father of all. Beyond the statues which made the city to the apostle's eyes "full of idols," the gods of licentious legend, there was a God proclaimed by the great poets and philosophers, All-powerful, All-wise, All-loving, and gracious to the good, the

> "Zeus, who leadeth men in wisdom's way,
> And fixeth fast the law,
> Wisdom by pain to gain,

the one of whom it might be said:

"What a pilot is to a ship, a driver in a chariot, a leader in a chorus, law in a state, a commander in a camp, this is God in the Universe, except that to those ruling is wearisome and full of effort and full of care,

but to Him it is without worry, without toil, and free from all bodily weakness. For seated unmoved, He moves all things, and turns them where He wills and as He wills, in different shapes and measures."

Thus for Greece the gods were not always the deities lying "beside their nectar," "careless of mankind," but as, to quote Plato once again, those who "care about the small as well as about the great . . . . They are perfectly good and the care of all things is most perfectly natural to them."

iv. In the fourth place, Greek religion had no unworthy idea of the proper issue of life beyond our present experience. To be conscious of God was to have hold upon the life of the immortals. It was comforting to men to think of Orpheus breaking into the realm of Hades in order to draw forth the soul of Eurydice. It was a joy to feel that the sacrifice of Alcestis in the interest of her selfish husband brings Heracles upon the scene to wrestle victoriously with Thanatos. The bringing back of wife and mother to the grief-stricken household fed the hopes of all men. It seemed worthy of the greatest of poets to proclaim a Zeus who "to the dead assigns the last great penalties," and of the greatest of philosophers to assert that when the soul "has communion with the Divine, she is carried into another and better place, which is also divine and perfect in holiness."

v. Such truths as the above were set forth particularly in the *Mysteries* which must certainly, without disparaging the belief in the divine origin

of Christianity, be regarded as having contributed to the sacramental system of the Church. Degraded as the mysteries of Eleusis may sometimes have become in tantric orgies, uncertain as their ritual seems to have been from such notices as we have in Apuleius and others, they were yet obviously an incentive to personal religion and the dramatization of a hopeful creed. "Whatever obscurity," says Dr. G. F. Moore (*History of Religions,* I 454), "surrounds the rites at Eleusis, there is no concealment of the faith of those who took part in them. From the Homeric Hymn on, the assurance of a blessed immortality is the good which men seek and find in the mysteries; it is this which gave them their persistent attraction not only for the multitudes, but for the noblest souls among the Greeks."

Josephus may well be the spokesman for the Judaism which welcomed such a stream, and for us who see beyond it a spring of living water in every heart, when he accepts the Mysteries as a revelation made by God to the Gentile as well as to the Jew.

vi. Once again, the moral teaching of the Greek was a gift to the world from God. At the time when Christianity commenced its course, Greece was "living Greece no more." Nevertheless, the testimony of the sages stood, and from the transfigured band of those who, before the day of Christ, witnessed for Christ, none may rule out the name of Socrates. "Socrates drinking the hem-

lock" has a part with "Jesus on the rood." It has been well said that "not only in the Man of Sorrows, as depicted by the Evangelical Prophet, but in the anticipations of the Socratic dialogues, there was the vision, even to the very letter, of the Just Man, scorned, despised, condemned, tortured, slain, by an ungrateful or stupid world, yet still triumphant."

It is the touch of the inevitable Cross upon the very religion which, among all the religions of the ancient world, was thought to have turned its back most definitely upon that Cross. Hear the last words of Socrates before his judges, and say if we can exclude this man from the company of those who were handing down a gift, for the Christ of the Cradle and the Cross alike to deem precious in His sight:

"You, too, O judges, it behooves to be of good hope about death, and to believe that this at least is true,—that there can no evil befall a good man, whether he be alive or dead, nor are his affairs uncared for by the gods."

Is it not plain that the Jew Philo was not false to the mission of his own race in receiving from the religion of the Greek ideas which he could blend with the revelation given to his fathers to form the doctrine of the Logos? Nor, receiving from the Greek, was he unrelated to the Christian future, since the truth he taught was to pass into the stream of Christology, made personal and real in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, to Whom Plato, no less than Isaiah, witnessed when he described

the perfect man as one who is the best and is esteemed the worst, and at the end is tortured, impaled, and slain?

Surely, here too we are meant to find the godward attitude, such as made the Jew the chosen servant to lead the pupil into the presence of the Christ, and so guide his feet "into the way of peace." The Greek too had his compelling prayer:

> "Lead thou me on, O Zeus!
> And thou, O Destiny!
> Whithersoever thou ordainest
> Unflinching will I follow;
> But if from wicked heart
> I will it not,
> Still must I follow."

5. We must finish this chapter with a few words respecting the gift of *Rome*. There are here several difficulties to be encountered, apart from the common difficulty of compressing into a page or two the most essential and outstanding points. We have first the difficulty which arises from the fact that the history of Roman religion is "chiefly the history of the introduction and more or less complete naturalization of foreign religions." There is much that is the residuum of primitive beliefs and cults, the worship of the *indigitamenta,* or functional gods; much that is survival from old Etruscan superstitions and practices; much also which was simply borrowed bodily from the Greek, although frequently enough disguised with different names.

A second difficulty springs from the impossibility of drawing the line precisely at the point where the Roman gift ceased to be indirect through the Jew and became direct in its influence upon the already established Christian Church. For this reason it is hard to know in what way to use the witness of the Stoics, *ce nuage frangé de rayons qui touche presqu'à l'immortelle aurore des verités chrêtiennes.* Whether Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius are, as thinkers and moralists, in the right line of descent from Cleanthes, or whether they are themselves touched by the golden ray of the newly risen Christian revelation, we cannot, in either case, put them outside the category of those minds "naturally Christian" which illustrate the continuity of the Divine leading. If even "the fierce Tertullian" could speak of *Seneca, saepe noster,* it does not become us to be catholic in a less degree.

But, outside of the witness of the Stoics, we have enough substance in the gift of Rome to understand why the title of the Saviour upon the Cross was written in Latin as well as in Hebrew and in Greek, and to appreciate also the representative character of the centurion's outspoken faith.

i. Rome gave to the first Christian apostles that vision of *catholicity* which is so powerfully reflected in the missionary strategy of S. Paul. With her Divine representative, Augustus, Divus, ruler over what appeared to be a Universe, Rome was

at once the symbol, as she became also the parody, of the world-wide dominion of the Christ. That "the kingdoms of the world" were to become "the kingdom of our God and of His Christ," that "all peoples, nations, kindreds, tongues" were to accept His authority, was a vision assisted not a little by the spectacle of political achievement which had welded nations, east and west, into one great Imperial entity, all of which paid tribute to the lord who sat upon the seven hills of Rome. Presently, of course, the symbolism was to bring out, by its very truth, the contrasts between the brutishness and falsehood of the material Rome and the vision of the City of God. But, in the years preceding the persecution of Nero, it is not to be forgotten that it was Rome which gave S. Paul the sense of scope for his evangel; it was Rome again which offered to the apostle's feet the roads which led from city to city through the Empire; it was Rome whose even-handed justice ensured his protection time and time again against the violence of the mob.

ii. It was from Rome, in the second place, that, with the vision of catholicity, came the expectation of an universal *law,* of an order, like the order of Camelot,

> "Where all about a healthful people moved,
> As in the presence of a gracious king."

The sense of law which ran through the Roman system had, when divorced from other things, its mischievous influence in later days, in making

too rigid and precise both the thinking and the acting of Christian men, but in these early days, in its influence upon the organization and the administration of the Christian communities, we cannot doubt that it was a providential gift for the extension of that spiritual kingdom which, first inspired by the conception of so vast an empire, was destined in time to proclaim its message in "regions Caesar never knew."

iii. To the expectation of universal empire, under the reign of universal law, was added the hope of universal *peace,* the beginning of that new age which, after all the troubles of the Republic, seemed predicted by the auspicious accession of Octavius Caesar. It makes little difference what the immediate occasion may have been for the writing by Vergil of the *Fourth Eclogue,* or the writing by Horace of his *Carmen Saeculare;* both poets prophesied better than they knew:

> "A mighty line of ages springs anew;
> The Maid returns and Saturn's golden prime;
> From heaven on high a new-born race descends."

In course of time Rome became, as has been said, the parody rather than the type of the City of God. As "the mystic Babylon" she became the antithesis of "the new Jerusalem," the symbol of the harlot-society doomed to the destroying judgment of an all-holy God.

Nevertheless, through all the smoke of apocalypse, Rome still emerges as a wonderful and inspiring idea.

We can well understand how the Abbé Pierre Froment in Zola's *Rome* could take his stand upon the hills outside the Sacred City, and "in the soft and veiled light of that lovely morning" could dream of all "the Rome of that first meeting, the Rome of early morning," suggested to his sanguine soul. "What a shout of coming redemption seemed to arise from her house roofs, what a promise of universal peace seemed to issue from that sacred soil, twice already Queen of the World."

Perhaps we too may dream with the Abbé of what that "third Rome" might be, if we could see all that its history suggests poured forth with humble adoration at the cradle of a new-born Christ. Then indeed, while we still continued to sing our "Jerusalem the Golden," we should have also in our hearts and on our lips the greeting:

*Ave, Roma Immortalis.*

# CHAPTER V

## THE GIFT OF THE EAST

"I dreamed
That stone by stone I reared a sacred fane,
A temple; neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,
But loftier, simpler, always open-doored
To every breath from Heaven; and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein."

—Tennyson, *Akbar's Dream.*

### SYNOPSIS

How Buddhism entered India—was Buddhism indebted to Christianity?—the relation of Oriental religions to Christianity—these, too, expectant of the Messiah.

The place of Confucius in Chinese religion—transmitter, not originator—mistaken criticism by missionaries—and by "Young China"—what Confucius has done for China—the emphasis on virtue—story of "the Four Knowings"—"the Great Learning"—emphasis on social obligation—doctrine of the "five Relations"—the stability of China—limitations of Confucianism—the reign of Law, not of Grace,—need of *Christus Consummator.*

Taoism—the Doctrine of the Way—the quietism of Lao Tzu—the ethics of Taoism—the Tao Têh King—the weakness and degradation of Taoism—China's need of the spiritual—"Jesus is left alone."

Buddhism—the attraction of Gautama—how the Buddha became S. Josaphat—the sense of pity in Budd-

hism—the first universal religion—a missionary religion—the developments of Mahayana—Buddhism in China and Japan—Amida worship—the failure of Buddhism—its sense of impermanence and unreality in man and God—the cure of sorrow illusory—the eternal note of sadness—"Buddhism abandons the world; Christ would redeem it."

What is Hinduism?—development from Nature worship to Pantheism—from Karma Kanda to Jnana Kanda—thence to *bhakti*—religious elements unsynthesised—the contributions to religion of Hinduism—association of religion and life—spiritual conception of the universe—the supremacy of the divine—the doctrine of Avatars—the splendor of Krishna—its weakness—sense of unreality—what Hinduism needs from Christ—the fulfilment of Akbar's dream—"Ferryman, take me across."

A FAMILIAR account of the introduction of Buddhism into China, relates that about A. D. 64 the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti had a dream, in which he beheld in his courtyard a golden man with two arrows in his hand. Summoning his soothsayers, the Emperor enquired of them what the vision meant, and was told it was sent to acquaint them of the birth in the far West of a great teacher and mighty lord of men. Forthwith Ming Ti sent his ambassadors, who reached at length the court of Gondophorus, the Indo-Parthian king of North-west India. There the Chinese envoys received the news of the Buddha, together with books and images which they carried back with them to their native land.

Now it has always been a question as to how far the Mahayana Buddhism thus introduced into

the Middle Kingdom had already intermingled with Christian and other western influences. Christian legend speaks of the Apostle S. Thomas as having labored in the realm of the same Indian prince at this very time. But, whatever may have been the elements of religion transmitted by this particular channel from west to east, affecting the religions of the Orient, it is quite plain that these religions, like those we considered in the last chapter, had their necessary part in preparing for a world religion, not as supplying something lacking in Christianity, but as representing a need to which Christianity, rather than anything within themselves, was the answer, and offering for religion that without which Christianity would but imperfectly achieve its manifold possibilities.

Let us see in the present chapter just what the relation is between Christianity and the religions of the Orient, in order that we may be the better prepared in our next chapter to understand the fulness with which Christ answers to the religious necessities of mankind.

In the last chapter we saw that the world religions of the past all helped to swell the tide of faith and hope which was brought to the cradle of the Christ; how each religion, with a sense more or less clear of what was needed to carry the soul through the mysteries of life and death, bore its witness to these needs, expectant, in common with the Jew, of its Messiah.

Here we shall set ourselves to behold humanity conscious of the same lack, but standing afar off, like the leper in the Gospel, waiting for the compassionate word and the healing touch. Yet, in all this waiting, in the very formulation of the plea, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" we shall see evidence of the fact that here, too, God has not left Himself without witness. Here too, in the great historic religions of the Orient at the present day, the universal faith to which the countless millions of India, China, and Japan turn their eyes, is that for which the Jew yearned as the consummation of his own age-long hope.

In the space at our disposal we shall be able to touch but four of these religions, selecting those of most wide-spread importance at the present day. Moreover, we shall exclude any consideration of Muhammadanism, preferring to think of that system as an imperfect or heretical form of Judaism or Christianity.

1. Let us ask first of all what must be the relation of Christianity to that ancient and deeply entrenched system which still to so large an extent holds the allegiance of China,—*Confucianism.*

No more than any other of the religions upon which we have touched can Confucianism be thought of apart from its antecedents. The Sage claimed to be a transmitter rather than an originator, and his teaching can no more be separated

from the primitive rites of ancestor-worship and divination than could the religion of Israel be separated from the Semitic cults out of which it grew. Nor may Confucianism be separated from that complicated system of State worship which it helped to maintain and to which it gave so much beautiful and suggestive symbolism.

Yet, in gathering these things together into a system and making of them a tradition, Confucius was certainly preparing China for some still better thing which neither he nor his disciples could possibly supply, perhaps could not even be expected to appreciate.

To-day Confucius is being attacked from two opposite quarters. First, from the side of the least intelligent missionary work such as sees hope for Christianity only after the making of a *tabula rasa* of all the past. Secondly, from a radical "Young China," which regards the Sage as a fetter upon the feet of progress. Each of these views is, we believe, mistaken. Christ needs in China, as well as in Judaea, His John the Baptist to prepare the path for His coming. Not apart from the leading of the Holy Spirit have the prophets of China witnessed in time past to the fathers in divers manners. Progress itself needs the past in order to give stability from which, as a starting point, the forward step is taken. From neither point of view is Confucius China's last word, yet neither Christianity nor a progressive civilization, if we can suppose the two things separable, may

benefit by the overthrow of the Sage's pedestal. As a distinguished missionary teacher (Dr. Soothill) has recently written: "While defective views of God and man's relationship to Him have hampered the upward progress of the Chinese, their sages have been men worthy of all honor, whose faces have been set toward the sun, and away from the abomination of darkness in which some of the other nations of the earth have weltered."

There are just two contributions of immense significance which the cause of religion owes to Confucianism, contributions which "the Master of all good workmen" will surely acknowledge with a "Well done, good and faithful servant."

i. First, there is the emphasis on *individual virtue.* The ideal of the superior man, as one who must be constantly cultivating the moral sense "by obeying which they obtain a nature constantly right," is one which has never been surpassed. That a man should daily judge himself in the forum of his own conscience is a great conception. That is a great conception, too, embodied in one of the smallest yet greatest of the Confucian classics, *The Great Learning,* which makes all education start with control over the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thus doing, man becomes the true sage and so rises to a potential rulership over family, state, and, if need be, the world itself. The initial phrase of this tiny treatise runs as follows: "The way of education lies in elucidating lucid virtue, in the renovation of the peo-

ple, and in stopping short of nothing but the *summum bonum.*"

The story of the *Four Knowings,* which tells how an official replied to one who had tempted him to fraud with the plea, "No one will know," "No one know? Why, I know, you know, Heaven knows, Earth knows," illustrates the lofty ethical principles inculcated by Confucianism. It was a great thing, moreover, to have these principles embodied in so noble and pure minded a character as Confucius.

Yet, although the ideal of the "superior man" thus lifts itself up towards the face of Christ, it is an ideal which can in no way dispense with that vitalizing and spiritualizing touch which only Christ may give.

Confucius was cold and unsympathetic, even apparently to wife and son. "Knowing God only as a majesty and never as a Father, the spring of his affections could not bubble joyously forth." The love which was so potent a force in the relation of Christ to His disciples, and which He offers to all the world, would have seemed to K'ung unworthy of a philosopher.

Moreover, Confucius was in no sense the Truth, or the Way, or the Life. He "did not know the ford"; so, knowing less than perfectly the meaning of life, he could not explain the mystery of death.

Once again, Confucius was by no means satisfied with the travail of his own soul, with the vi-

sion of his victory ahead. His last utterance is the cry of the disappointed:

> "The great mountain must crumble,
> The strong beam must break,
> And the sage wither like grass."

ii. Secondly, there is strong emphasis on those bonds of *social obligation* which are comprised in what is called "the doctrine of the Five Relations." These are the relation of subject to ruler, of wife to husband, of son to father, of younger brother to elder brother, and of friend to friend. Casuistical as this doctrine was sometimes made out to be, it has a certain spiritual element, since in all things there is recognition of the spirits of the ancestors, and a sense of communion with the departed.

What we have so far mentioned has gone far towards explaining China's history as that of the longest lived of earthly governments, a staying of the tendency to disintegrate during times of political tyranny and anarchy, a binding of family to family and village to village, even a moulding of the incoming hordes of barbarians into conformity with Confucian ideals. In such ways as these the way was kept open, not ineffectively, for the sure coming of Him Who promises the gathering together of His "other sheep."

Of course, all that Confucianism achieved made more obvious the need for this coming of Christ to complete what had been begun. The social glue of China, under the Confucian system, was not

Love, but Habit. It established the reign of Law, not of Grace. The hold on the spiritual world it offered did not by any means reach to God, the Father of all spirits. The sense of life, in spite of the worship offered to the dead, was ever incomplete. Human nature, good as it was thought to be, was never lifted really above the sordidness of earth into a vision of the Communion of Saints. The quality of life was never transfigured by the inrush of all the Gospel has to give.

So, while men may justly praise Confucius for what he was and for what he did, the political reformer and the Christian alike are right in requiring something more and better for the salvation of China.

2. At the opposite extreme to Confucianism, in many respects, is *Taoism,* a system which has deserved a happier fate than that which has overtaken it in modern times. A little senior to Confucius, Lao Tzu seems at first glance to have offered to China a something the more orthodox teaching of Confucius did not attempt to give. The doctrine of the Way is a doctrine of Grace rather than a preaching of the Law. "You cannot turn a pigeon into a crow by painting it black," said the Old Philosopher. Life harnessed to the *Way,* which some have translated "the principle of things," some "the Logos," and which some have not hesitated to render "God," must inevitably lead to success, achievement without struggle, the blessedness of the eternal and the absolute.

Nor was such a quietistic attitude without its ethical side. Some of the most beautiful of all ethical maxims are to be found in the Taoist book, *Kan Ying P'ien*, where, e.g., it is said of the good man: "Let him correct himself and transform others. Let him pity the fatherless and show kindness to the widow, reverence the old and cherish the young. Let him sorrow over men's ills, and rejoice over their good, help them in their straits, and save them in their perils. Let him look upon the blessings received by others as if they were his own, and upon the losses of others as if they were his own losses." And so on.

The general attitude of the Taoist, however, was that of the mystic and the quietist, as illustrated by the well-known sayings of the *Tao Têh King*:

"Keep behind and you shall be put in front."
"He who is content has enough."
"Recompense injury with kindness."
"To the good I would be good. To the not good also I would be good in order to make them good."

Or we may recall the suggestive words of Chwang Tzu, one of the saintliest souls that ever lived beneath a Chinese sky, a true precursor, on some sides, of S. Francis:

"The command of armies is the lowest form of virtue. Rewards and punishments are the lowest form of education. Ceremonies and laws are the lowest form of government. Music and fine clothes are the lowest form of happiness. Wailing and mourning are the lowest form of

grief. These five should follow the movements of the mind."

Yet, with all the unquestionable beauty which attaches to the writings and the lives of the first Taoist philosophers, Taoism has remained ineffectual in the uplifting and saving of the land to which their witness was vouchsafed. The Way of Lao Tzu is not, after all, a living Way. There is in it nought to bring out the cry of recognition:

"A Face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee."

Life in its real fulness and genuine quality was so vaguely conceived that it is hardly to be wondered at that subsequent generations of Taoists substituted for its quest the merely selfish search for a magical Philosopher's Stone and an Elixir Vitae.

Hence it came about that the system which promised most became worst, an instance of *Corruptio optimi pessima est.* Taoism, instead of promoting spirituality, lent itself to the pseudo-magic and general charlatanry of present-day superstition. What might at least have been the complement and corrective of a mere moral philosophy degenerated into a mass of stupid futilities.

Taoism too, though like its rival system it bore witness to the religious cravings of the Middle Kingdom, could not of itself supply the answer which the soul was waiting for. Like all the other

religions we have considered, like Judaism itself, it had to await the "fulness of time" for the Christ, through Whom alone the pilgrims on life's way might find their final peace.

A familiar Chinese legend tells that once upon a time the teachers of the *San Chiao* (The Three Religions), K'ung, Lao, and Fo (the Buddha) came down to earth to ascertain why it was that, in spite of all the splendid ethical content of their teachings, China still remained unregenerate. Reaching the earth, they proceeded to interrogate an elderly man who seemed likely to furnish the desired information. So they catechised him on the principles of their respective systems. Greatly, however, to their surprise, the old man, who turned out to be letter perfect in the Way of Virtue, the Classics, and the Sutras, confessed that all this knowledge was powerless to advance China along the way of goodness. "Sirs," he said, "we are stone from the waist downwards; we can think and know, but we cannot act."

Such is the condition, not alone of China, but of the whole world till to the dispensation of the Law and the Prophets is added the dispensation of Grace. Then, although, as objects of supreme regard, Moses and Elijah, Confucius and Lao Tzu, and all the rest, disappear from sight, "Jesus is left alone," the One for Whom the world has prayed, come at last, "not to destroy but to fulfil."

3. When we take up the study of the early his-

tory of *Buddhism,* we feel that here, more nearly than in any other of the world religions, until we come to Christianity itself, we find the Person of the Founder more important than the system, though it was the teaching rather than the teacher who was put forward as the means of man's salvation. Gautama himself is the centrally attractive figure of Buddhism. No more humanly loveable character has appeared among the sons of men, none with more charm, more universal charity, none more pure or worthy of the creed he taught, none more resolute in his self-abnegation, none more strong to fight the wiles of Mara, the prince of evil, none more victoriously persistent to the last in the proclamation of the saving way.

The accidental manner in which, through the popularity of the mediaeval romance, *Barlaam and Josaphat,* Gautama became a saint in the Christian calendar, though not without its irony, possesses the fullest justification, and would do so even had the canonization come about by deliberate ecclesiastical action. Souls like Gautama are quite as much in place in the Church Calendar as were the souls of the pagans whom Dante admitted to the spheres of Paradise.

Further, the teaching of the Buddha turned in many ways in the direction of that Light which "coming into the world enlighteneth every man."

The sense of pity for all sentient things, developed ultimately into the demand for the preach-

ing of sorrow's cure, even "while a gnat cries," had tremendous personal and social result in the caste-ridden India of the pre-Christian world and in the many lands to which the faith was borne. Indeed, its first success sprang rather from its social appeal than from any feature of its philosophy. It was the first religion to proclaim itself as universal, though without a fulness adequate for meeting the universal need. It "possessed a world-wide horizon and was committed to a world-wide dissemination." There was no barrier which the love of the Buddha was not bold enough to break. He could eat with the çudra, converse with the courtesan, mingle alike with kings and beggars, even, through other existences, reach out to share the pains and supply the wants of the brute creation. The measureless compassion of the "Eight-fold Way" went far towards disguising the essential pessimism of the "Four Noble Truths."

Further still, although many foreign elements, including, doubtless, some which were Christian, came to increase the appeal which Buddhism made as a missionary religion, particularly in what is known as the Mahayana form, yet there is something purposeful and organic in the development which marks its progress from India to the countries of the Far East as a competing and conquering system.

So we see the atheism of Indian Buddhism transformed into polytheism, and, in the case of some of the Japanese sects, even into something

approaching monotheism. So, again, the soteriology of Indian Buddhism which made every man his own saviour,—the type called by the Japanese, *jiriki* (one's own strength) is supplanted by the doctrine of salvation by trust in Amida,—the type known in Japan as *tariki* (another's strength). Again, we see the blankness of a Nirvana practically equivalent to non-existence gradually superseded by teaching as to a Western Paradise in which personal blessedness may be enjoyed. And, lastly, we see the Indian ideal of arhatship, in which the goal of each man's endeavor is the speediest possible attainment of Nirvana, rejected for the ideal of Buddhahood, in which man's aim is rather to benefit his fellows till the last of this world's sorrows has been extinguished.

In much of this there was to be discerned the following of a gleam which came less from the Way of Buddha than from the Way which was Christ. Sir Edwin Arnold was not far from the fact when he placed upon the lips of his Buddhist visitor to Galilee the words:

"I do discern that, forth from this fair life
And this meek Death and thine arisen Christ,
Measureless things are wrought; a Thought-dawn born
Which shall not cease to broaden, till its beam
Makes noon of knowledge for a gathered world,
Completing what our Buddha left unsaid;
Carpeting bright his noble Eight-fold Way
With fragrant blooms of all-renouncing love,
And bringing high Nirvana nearer hope,
Easier and plainer."

But there was more in pity, both human and divine, than it was possible for Gautama to discover for the remedying of the world's ills, and in the eternal issue there was fuller content than was suggested by the negations of Nirvana. Buddhism, considered as a finality, was a failure. It was powerless to lift the individual above the insurgent ills of life; it has proved powerless to deliver the Orient from its social and political miseries. Only too obviously, in the grossness and superstition of modern China, one realizes how Buddhism has sunk into ready connivance with the charlatanry of a debased Taoism. Even in Japan, where Amidaism has striven to give to the idea of God and the idea of human personality a semblance of reality, the failure of the faith of Shaka is all too plain, and all too plain the effort to eke out its deficiencies by the borrowing from Christian method.

Nor is it difficult to assign reasons for such a failure. The keynote of Buddhism, it has been said, is in the word Impermanence. God, under whatever name, even in polytheistic or apparently monolatrous forms of Buddhism, is Himself but a part of the great illusion. Amida, Maitreya, this one or that, all sink back ultimately into Maya; they fade away just when human hands most yearn to touch them. "Amida's Paradise is indeed a very concrete heaven to the average believer. But as the believer grows in intelligence and begins to delve in the deeper teachings of his sect, his vision

of Paradise begins to fade. He learns that for 'practical' purposes he should act and live as if the achievement of an enriched personality were the goal of all our strivings and the one value which abides the wreck of time, but in reality personality and all individuality cannot be a permanent state." The world is one like that described by Prospero:

> "The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> With all that it inhabit, shall dissolve,
> And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind."

Hence the cure of sorrow, except to those who have taken despair to themselves as a bride, must be illusory too. As in the familiar story of the woman and the millet seed, Buddhism has no comfort to give except in saying that "loss is common to the race," that misery is inseparable from life.

No wonder we find that, at its very best, Buddhism is tinged with ineffaceable sadness, the sadness of those who panted for life, yet were offered consolation only in the abnegation of life; of those who craved for peace, but were offered peace only in the dreamless sleep of Nirvana. As it has been put by a non-Christian Chinese writer, quoted by Soothill, "Buddhism abandons the world; Christianity would redeem it."

Surely the Prince Siddhartha, had he lived in Galilee instead of India, and had been able to share the lot of Jesus of Nazareth rather than

that of the ascetics of Benares, would not have needed to flee to bleak negations as a refuge from the world's sorrow, but, hearing the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," would have followed in the way and so learned to exhaust pessimism at its very source.

4. The last of the world's great religious systems upon which we must touch is that strange medley of elements, the creed of over two hundred millions of the human race, which we call *Hinduism.*

The difficulty of dealing with such a system as briefly as is here necessary is enhanced by the fact that the term Hinduism has been used as a kind of rag-bag made to hold all kinds of things from the grossest forms of devil-worship to the loftiest speculations of the Upanishads. Another difficulty arises from the unknown extent and degree to which Hinduism, like other Eastern religions, is to-day indebted to the religions of the West.

Nevertheless, we may note a certain continuity and consistency which manifest a true evolution of a particular type, and furnish us with one more Old Testament requiring the New Testament of the Christian revelation.

In the early Vedic days, illustrated in the splendid hymns which form our first Aryan literature, we have the simple and sincere religion of those who recognized divine forces in the phenomena of Nature. With their storm gods and their fire

gods, the Vedic Aryans became polytheists, and yet very nearly also monotheists, as we may see from the hymns to Varuna and the very striking poem addressed to the Unknown God. But, instead of treading, as did the Jew, the way to monotheism, they took the other path which, resolving all the nature gods into one, became pantheism. In this pantheism all was turned into deity to the destruction of deity itself. *Tout était Dieu excepté Dieu même.* To see God in Nature is, of course, a necessary element of religion, an element largely recovered for us, by the way, through modern science, after the desolating deism of the 18th century. The language of Tennyson is as true to one aspect of Christian theology as it is to the thought of Lucretius:

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, the plains,
Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him who reigns?
Is not the vision he, tho' he be not that which he seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do not we live in dreams?
Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from him?
Speak to him, then, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet:
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.
And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear this vision, were it not he?"

But, unfortunately, religion in India was un-

able to synthesize the various elements which would have made her witness to this particular truth effective. There was a sense of God's immanence which, dispensing with the complementary fact of His transcendence, in the course of time made His very existence little but a dream. There was a devotion to works of the ritualistic sort which made Karma Kanda, as it was called, a mere wearisome round of ceremonial observances without any moral or religious value. There was the reaction from this to what was termed Jnana Kanda, the religion of knowledge which tempted speculation into an atmosphere ever more tenuous, until intellect committed suicide in the effort to feed upon its own illusions. There followed again the experiment of *bhakti,* or devotion, a devotion to deities whose existence was assumed to deceive the starving emotions of men.

Hence the evils of a religion, conceived not comprehensively but departmentally, entered to rob India of many of those fruits of faith which her genuine interest in religion seemed to demand and deserve.

Much indeed in the long story of Indian religion, as a story covering the experience of a thousand years before the rise of Buddhism, and that of over a thousand years since Buddhism ceased to be an Indian religion, belongs to the same preparation for the revelation of Christ which we regard as the explanation of Judaism.

There was the constant emphasis on the applicability of religion to every detail of human life, without distinction between the sacred and the secular.

There was the more or less continuously spiritual attitude which bore fruit from age to age in religious reformations, from the days of the ancient Rishis to the days of Kabir and Nanak, of Ramanuja and Ramananda, and so on to the theistic movements of our own day.

There is the witness of saintly devotion in much of the religious literature of India, which, despite its occasional childishness, has bequeathed to the world the treasures of the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita.

There is the constant witness to the supremacy of the divine, in comparison with which all things are *maya,* or illusion.

There is the witness to the will of that Divine Absolute to manifest itself to men, so that the movements of God towards the world, called Avatars, become great redemptive acts, affording consolation for the present and hope for the future. The humility of Arjuna's prostration before the splendid revelation of Krishna cannot fail to prepare the souls of men for the more marvellous manifestation of God in Christ.

In all this God has not left Himself without witness, but it is a witness which is continually urging on the still unsatisfied spirit to the expectation of clearer light and completer

knowledge than any Hindu scripture could afford.

With Indian theology vitiated by that same sense of impermanence which hangs over the witness of Buddhism, with the moral vision of God faint in the very effort to make it bright, we feel that no revelation of Deity, even should we, as some have suggested, fit the Christ in a Hindu niche as the tenth avatar of Vishnu, comes to us with a sense of supreme reality. Gods and men, angels and demons, all alike fade away into the background of cloud which is the final word of India with respect to all things upon which men have set their affections.

Furthermore, without that personal devotion to the real, the true, the "genuine" God, Whom the Christian apostle contrasts with the "shadows" (I S. John v. 21), there can be no satisfactorily ethical or rational or emotional religion, such as delivers us from the barren business of ritual, the vapid speculations of the philosophers, or the tantric excesses and immoral license of Çakti.

Many indeed are the saints of India who by a true faith have risen to the seeing and the doing of noble and inspiring things. The fruits of a truly Christian faith find their harvest in the lives of men like Tagore and Gandhi, and many another, who profess not the name of Jesus with their lips.

But for the salvation of India, as Dr. Farquhar has said:

"A new religion must be found, a religion which will provide a religious foundation for the wider and truer ideas which now dominate the Hindu mind; satisfy the religious instincts of the people, and stimulate them to purity, progress, and strength. Christianity is unquestionably the source of the new explosive thought which is recreating the Indian character and intellect to-day. There is no other religion which contains these master ideas. Only in the riches of Christianity,—Christ and His Cross, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Kingdom of God—can Hindus find the universal principles needed for a new intellectual, moral, and social life."

Here is the fulfilment of Akbar's Dream, entrance into the universal faith, which is indeed "open-doored to every breath from Heaven."

"I can never forget," writes Tagore, "that scrap of a song I once heard in the early dawn in the midst of the din of the crowd that had collected for a festival the night before, 'Ferryman, take me across to the other shore.' The poet proceeds to speak of that other shore, beyond our striving and our toil, the shore for which all human hearts are yearning. Surely it is a prayer which we feel rising through all the beliefs and forms of these Eastern religions. Surely it is a prayer which we feel Christ alone has the power to answer. "For here rolls the sea, and even here lies the other shore waiting to be reached,—yes, here is this everlasting present, not distant, not anywhere else."

# CHAPTER VI

## CHRIST THE ANSWER

"In Him of Whom the sibyl told,
For Whom the prophet's harp was toned,
Whose need the sage and magian owned,
The loving heart of God behold,
The hope for which the ages groaned! . . . .
"The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold."—*Whittier.*

### SYNOPSIS

"The desirable things of the nations"—survey of previous chapters—"waiting for the consolation of Israel" —the substance of the expectation—the Messianic hope —the sense of sin—Does the fulfilment correspond with the magnitude of the hope?—"What think ye of Christ?" —no figment of the imagination—the documents and their use—"the *Quis*, the *Qualis*, the *Quantus*" of Jesus.

The differences between Christ and other teachers—the self-witness of Jesus—revealer and embodiment of a new method—the place of the Cross—the vital union of Christ and believer—the sacramental side—Christianity and the Mystery cults—Christ an "expression point" in evolution.

The witness of Christ to God—to His humanness—to His immanence—to His transcendence—how Christ becomes the revelation of God to all men.

The witness of Christ to Man—the perfection of the individual life—the need of immortality—the need of the Kingdom—the metaphor of the Family and the Tree—glimpses of the Absolute in Christ—the inspiration of the Christ—the victory of "the Lonely Man."

IN one of the most familiar passages of Hebrew prophecy, the prophet Haggai, seeking to hearten the disillusioned and discouraged Jews who had returned from Babylon to take up the rebuilding of their devastated city and desecrated shrine, uttered the startling prediction that the edifice as to whose future they took so gloomy a view would become more glorious than anything which had preceded it. Moreover, the prophet gave the reason for his optimism. Here, he said, would be revealed "the desirable things of the nations."

There could be only one intelligible and satisfactory fulfilment of these prophetic words, though other fulfilments have been here and there timidly suggested. It is to this fulfilment that we shall direct our thoughts in the present chapter.

We have sketched, with necessary haste and incompleteness, the gradual emergence, in what we term primitive religion, of some of those appetites and longings, often crudely, savagely, sensually, even obscenely, expressed, for the things which represented the heart's desire of the ancient world.

We have seen, again, how these things were

taken up into the religion of the Jew, and there refined, interpreted, restated.

We have seen the stream of Jewish witness reinforced by all those tributary streams which flowed into it from the religions of the nations with whom the history of the Jew was blended, and still further enlarged out of the emotions and experiences of the human heart expressed in the religions of the outside world.

Now we take our stand at that point where Judaism, passing the experience of the nations through the crucible of its own religious history, is enabled, as God's priest, to make the offering of all to the long expected Messiah, in order that He may Himself bring to the desire of the world an answer such as no religious system had ever dreamed possible of realization.

With the elect "remnant" of God's people, with men like Simeon and women like Anna, waiting "for the consolation of Israel," was waiting all the world beside. As the Jewish priests stood upon the temple platform, watching for the first glint of the rising sun, when the silver trumpets would give forth the signal for the morning sacrifice, so watching, "more than watchmen wait for the morning," waited the expectant world—

> "Upon the world's great altar stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God."

As the multitude outside the temple court on the Day of Atonement waited for the sound of the

bells which announced the coming forth of the High Priest to bless, so men waited everywhere, hopeful and tense, for the appearance of that "Day of the Lord" which was to be the day of the world's redemption.

But the fulfilment of human hope involves something more than the granting to men the mere letter of their expectation. It must correspond with something as deep as the most unfelt of their needs, needs divinely seen, yet as yet well nigh unintelligible to human minds and inexpressible in human language. It must give more than man may ask or think, yet must at the same time speak articulately even to the understanding of the child.

What, briefly, must the substance of such an expectation be?

*First,* it must be the full revelation of God, as one associated with all the processes of life, and yet transcending all that tribal and national theologies had been able to suggest.

*Secondly,* it must be the full revelation of the meaning of life, in both its individual and corporate aspects, keeping in view both a temporal and an eternal significance, climbing up from its lowest manifestations, yet claiming a union with the Divine to which the marriage metaphor of the prophets of Judaism was as inadequate as that transcended the physical symbols of the older paganism.

*Thirdly,* it must represent adequately the es-

tablished linking of the Divine and the human, as prophetic of the final perfection of Creation, in the full revelation of One Who is at once Divine and Human, the revelation of God, the firstfruits of creation, the Lord of a Society which is at once the true kingdom of Israel and the rallying-point for a redeemed universe, One Who is at once King, Prophet, Priest, Sacrificial Victim, Sacrificial Feast, the Way to Life, and the Source of Life in one.

It may be noticed that in all that has hitherto been said of the preparation of the world for Christ, little has been said of the developing sense of sin. The reason for this will be apparent when we reflect that the sense of sin is the obverse of a gradually enlarging conception of God. The sequence of the three prayers spoken of in a familiar story,—"Lord, show me myself," "Lord, show me Thyself," "Lord, make me like Thyself,"—is wrong. We do not find God by realizing our own sinfulness, but rather we realize our sinfulness just in proportion as we become conscious of the holiness of God. It was Isaiah's vision of Yahweh which compelled the cry, "I am a man of unclean lips"; it was S. Peter's new vision of the Saviour on the Lake of Galilee which forced from him the confession, "Depart from me; I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Consequently, we have assumed throughout that as men caught glimpses, however faint, of the character and being of God, it would fill their re-

ligious literature with confessions of sin, prayers of penitence, and pleas for absolution.

It is for us to ask in the present chapter how far we may honestly expect the world to recognize in the Christ of the New Testament the fulfilment of what we have gathered up as the substance of the expression, "the desirable things of the nations."

Is the magnitude of the fulfilment offered in the Person and work of Christ correspondent with the magnitude of the desire expressed? Is Christ the answer honestly and adequately vouchsafed?

The figure of Christ as given in the composite picture afforded by the Epistles and Gospels (the Epistles, the reader should be reminded, no less than the Gospels) is plainly no figment of the imagination. Unless we are prepared to deal dishonestly with "the documents in the case" and put them aside merely because they conflict with preconceived theories of our own, we must use them just as we would use any other documents which we desired conscientiously to treat as materials for historical investigation.

Putting aside all that may be explained by the literary methods or intellectual limitations of the age, we find, in spite of the varied authorship of the New Testament books, an impressively harmonious unity. We discover that the picture has not, after all, as we may have been informed, been blurred for us by ages of elaborate Christological theorising, nor have we been hypnotized through

ecclesiastical conventions into the acceptance of a portrait which is inconsistent with the Christ of the first Christian writings. The pendulum of Christian opinion, in answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" may have swung from one extreme to another, suggesting to one age a Jesus all mildness and passivity, to another one fiery and imperious, compact of strength and overflowing with scornful indignation. Gilbert Chesterton has spoken scathingly of those who tear into "silly strips" the soul of Jesus to make Him at once responsible for the pacificism of Edward the Confessor and the military passion of Richard Coeur de Lion. But such errors mark the limitations of the beholder, not the defect of the Christ as suggested by the New Testament record.

The Gospels (and Epistles) furnish us with no abstraction of theological schematism, no imagination of flabby pietism, no grotesque picture of an Oriental magician such as is preferred in the Apocryphal Gospels. Rather are we enabled to see, with Luther, the *Quis,* the *Qualis,* the *Quantus,* of One Who reveals to us what, after all, no "flower in the crannied wall" is able to give, namely, "all that God and Man is."

Before speaking specifically of certain fundamental things in this double revelation, let us note certain differences, in their own way as fundamental, between Christ and the Founders of other religious systems.

i. Christ is His own witness to Himself. Other

teachers point away from themselves to announce a Way or a doctrine concerning which they claim no more than that they are its appointed heralds, or, at most, through the revelation of God, its discoverers. Christ is Himself the Teacher and the Truth, the Physician and the Medicine, the Guide and the Way, the Life and the Life-giver. That reiteration of the "I," which in the case of others would repel by its egoism, in His case assures us by virtue of its authority. Had He been Teacher alone, or Example alone, Christianity might have turned out to be a philosophy or a system of ethics. Seeing that He is the Life, true religion must be from henceforth nothing less than sacramental union with God through participation in the life of Christ set free for the believer.

ii. Christ is at once the revealer and the embodiment of a new method,—old indeed as Creation itself, since to create is to be crucified, and to be created is also to be crucified, but startlingly new when enunciated as a Gospel rather than as a Curse,—the method of the Cross. Infinite harm has been done to the ideals of religion by making the Cross only an incident in the story of Christ, instead of being the motive power of the Incarnation itself, the climax of all the epiphanies presented to the eyes of men, the permanent glory which makes "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" the centre of the Universe and worshipful to all eternity. Perhaps much of the blame for an error which has even colored men's

thoughts of heaven as an escape from the way of the Cross, tolerated here more or less patiently, into a blessedness not essentially different from the gilded ease that the worldling prefers to anticipate on earth, may be traced to the mistranslation of a single verse in S. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (ii 6-7). When the apostle says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," he does not follow up the injunction by describing Jesus as emptying Himself of His glory or His Godhead in order to take upon Himself the servant's form, humbling Himself to the death of the Cross. Rather does he assert that His very equality with God made all this possible, since God too lives by "emptying Himself," pouring out His love "like the rush of a river." So the passage, properly translated, runs: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, did not deem His being equal with God a means of grasping things, but (on the contrary) emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant."

Without the correction of this popular error, Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, remains obscure, the method of Christ's earthly ministry a contradiction to His essential being, and that essential being a mockery rather than a support to those who suffer.

Deliberately putting aside those well-worn philosophies of life which others had proposed, Jesus espoused confidently and with joy the way

of the Cross as the Divine principle which had operated from the beginning for the uplifting of Creation all the way from Chaos to the divinely purposed Cosmos. Confronted at the beginning of the ministry with the temptation to accept "the satanism of time" as determining the Messianic policy, to gain the homage of men by feeding them with earthly bread, to attract the faith of the world by dazzling feats, such as leaping from the temple roof, to establish the kingdom by some political *tour de force* such as the Time-spirit made all too possible,—He chose rather to offer the food for which the human spirit was really anhungered, to accept for Himself and His disciples the long, slow way of sacrificial love, to trust the kingdom to the divine intuition which proclaims, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

iii. Thus proclaiming Himself the Life, and thus making that Life available to all by sacramental union with Himself, even as the harvest grain partakes of the nature of the seed-corn whence it sprung, Christ makes of His Church something different from any assemblage of believers that had ever before gathered around a religious teacher. It was a relation which had indeed been symbolized, both in the mystery cults of Greece and the sacrificial system of many other lands, but it had never hitherto been made an element in universal religion. Men had been buried and brought forth from burial to symbolize the

new religious birth; they had been taken by gross pantomime through the process of that new birth; to add force to the symbolism, they had been taught anew the first syllables of language, as though they had been verily and indeed new-born babies. Men had been placed physically in the still warm carcasses of the accepted sacrifice, or, for the same reason, passed between the pieces, in order to show how closely they were identified with the life which sacrificially had been lifted up to God. But all these were symbols only of the facts which Christ made basal in the new birth of Baptism or in the feeding of hungry souls with Eucharistic food in the feast wherein Christ was at once Priest and Victim.

These differences must be regarded as proofs of that uniqueness which justifies the recognition in Jesus Christ of one of those biological "expression points" which, like the blossoming time of a flower for which all the winter and the spring have been preparing, appear here and there in the story of evolution to mark the milestones along the way of the spirit. For, as a distinguished writer on Evolution has said: "In evolution a goal is not only a completion of one stage, but also the beginning of another and higher stage,—on a higher plane of life with new and higher capacities and powers unimaginable from any lower plane." (Le Conte, *Evolution and Religion,* p. 361.)

Let us analyse as simply as we may that "Faith-

ful and True Witness" by which, as by a magnet men are gradually being drawn together into the society which is to be the Universal Church.

1. Christ satisfies the desire of men to look upon the face of God,—"the very God, think, Abib, only think." Of course, this is a revelation which has in it no suggestion of intellectual definition or philosophic finality. It is still true, after the witness of Christ, as before it, that—

> "Under the vertical sun the exposed brain,
> And lidless eye and disemprisoned heart
> Less certainly would wither up at once
> Than mind, confronted with the truth of Him."

Christ, as the revelation of God, is still the Way, the Way especially suited for human feet to tread. So the threefold manner in which the revelation comes is exactly what is needed.

i. *First,* God is revealed by Christ in His *Humanness.* The anthropomorphic terminology which we must necessarily employ in speaking of God, and the necessary anthropomorphism of our very conceptions of God, are not merely concessions to human limitations, but the assertion of this essential humanness which is implicit in the nature of God. God does, in very fact, touch humanity through the Incarnation, that Incarnation which is not a mere device to remedy a broken plan, but of the essence of the Gospel of Creation itself.

ii. *Secondly,* God is revealed by Christ in His *Immanence.* Men have desired to see God in Na-

ture, in all the ways suggested by the poets from the Vedas down to Shelley and Wordsworth and Tennyson, and later. Christ must give us the God desired of Christopher Morley:

> "The God from whom
> No thought, no mind, can ever be shut out,
> The God of gales and gravity,
> The God of honorable doubt.
> God of the odorous Eskimo
> Under the flickering Arctic glow.
> God of the Kootenai forest spires
> (I've seen them on a postal card)
> God of the dog that never tires
> Of looking hopefully at his master."

All creation is eloquent of the divine purpose, but there is needed a Christ to interpret. "Earth's crammed with Heaven," but the Christ must give the vision. Matter, as well as spirit, is the sphere of the divine working, but only the miracle of the Incarnation gives faith its proper foothold. Christ makes every groan of creation a lifting up of life towards the victory of the Cross.

iii. But lest man should think of God as real only to the euhemerist and the pantheist, revealed upon the summit peaks of humanity and in the processes of Nature, Christ reveals Him also as *Transcendent*. He is supramundane and extramundane, yet to be named in that name of names, which is the parable of all that brings God nearest to the heart,—*Father*. Men sometimes speak glibly of the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, as though it were a doctrine obvious and

undogmatic. The truth is, that, far from being an easy creed, it would be well-nigh an impossible creed had not Christ vindicated for us its validity. It is not merely that He envisages life as the being about a "Father's business," or that He teaches men to pray, "Our Father, which art in Heaven"; it is especially that on the Cross, when the faith of most men in God's Fatherhood breaks down most conspicuously, sometimes even with blasphemy, His faith is to the last unclouded and serene. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Thus, all men, from whatever angle of experience they may view their life, are enabled to attain to God through Christ. The child may quiet its nightly fear of the dark with the simple prayer:

> "Jesu, tender Shepherd, hear me,
> Bless Thy little lamb to-night";

the young man realizes His ideal of "the Happy Warrior" out of a sense of being companioned by Him "Who for the joy that was set before Him" went stedfastly on to Jerusalem; even the haughty and disillusioned Queen, in the play, may clasp God to her heart in the proud, pathetic cry:

> "I'm head of the Church
> And stoop my neck on Sunday—to what Christ?
> The God of little children? I have none.
> The God of love? What love has come to me?
> The God upon the ass? I am not meek,
> Nor is he meek, the stallion that I ride,

The great white horse of England. I'll not bow
To the gentle Jesus of the women, I—
But to the Man Who hung 'twixt earth and heaven
Six mortal hours, and knew the end (as strength
And custom was) three days away, yet ruled
His soul and body so, that when the sponge
Bless'd the crack'd lips with promise of relief
And quick oblivion, He would not drink:
He turn'd His head away, and would not drink:
Spat out the anodyne, and would not drink.
This was a God for kings and queens of pride,
And Him I follow."

So, in the words of Richard Watson Gilder, put upon the lips of a Galilean of Christ's own day,

"If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, and the sea, and the air."

2. And the converse is equally true:

"If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
And to Him will I cleave alway."

For Christ satisfies also all that men have desired to see realized in Man. All creation is full of the Divine Presence, but the Presence shows through most resplendently at creation's topmost peak. Anatomically akin to the ape, disgusting and degradable to a point in reference to which a philosopher may speak of man as "the ugliest of idols," and another describe the race as "mostly

fools," man has yet dreams of a godlike destiny for the species. He is "noble in reason," "infinite in faculty," "in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god, the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals." He is Nature's last handiwork, "such splendid purpose in his eyes," "the consummation of this scheme of being, the completion of this sphere of life: whose attributes had here and there been scattered o'er the visible world before asking to be combined, dim fragments meant to be united in some wondrous whole." All this is vindicated before the eyes of men in Christ, thus redeeming all heredity back to the remotest, and making the least and lowest "kin to the highest and partner to the best."

Moreover, as we saw the perfection of the Divine revealed by Christ along three several lines, so along three lines we see the completeness of the human.

i. Christ displays the perfection of the *individual life*. It is a life unfolding, under no extraordinary conditions of place, or time, or circumstance, but unfolding naturally in each successive human stage, a continuous epiphany of filial obedience, neighborly kindness and consideration, human helpfulness, all recommended by that "sweet, attractive kind of grace" which made humanity in Him "beautiful" (*kalos*) as well as "good" (*agathos*). A life, moreover, not merely in the negative sense free from sin, but positively an exemplification of graces and virtues so com-

pletely harmonized as sometimes to need the analysis which reduces the sunbeam to its several colors in order that we may appreciate the beauty and perfection of each. All, once again, transfigured by the love of man and the love of God, the perfect fulfilment of the law, the love which prevents the purity from seeming cold, or the meekness from seeming weak, the strength from seeming harsh, the holiness from seeming unsympathetic with failure. Thus comes to us, with a supreme sense of conviction, the revelation of one individual life whose obedience may fitly be summed up in the dying words: "It is finished."

ii. It is a revelation of *human nature* such as makes obvious demand for a larger arena of experience than is provided on the earthly stage. Jesus says little in the way of formal statement as to the doctrine of a future life, or as to the immortality of the soul. But His message and the relation established between Himself and the disciple makes the doctrine of immortality plainly necessary, since the conviction of the worthfulness of life here and now gives justification to the desire for its continuance. As Robert Louis Stevenson has said: "To believe in immortality is one thing, but first of all it is needful that we believe in life." In an age when men were beginning to crave for Lethe and Nepenthe out of despair over "the weary weight of this unintelligible world," Jesus, "the Resurrection and the Life," so raised the evaluation of life as consisting in the knowledge

of and the communion with God, the Father of all, that it became henceforth unthinkable to believers that faculties awakened into being should not be granted their fulfilment in the use of "the full-grown energies of heaven." Life conceived, not as mere endlessness, but as value to be conserved, shared, moreover, with God Himself, could not fail to carry its gains unspilled through the experience which, proved to be no curse, had become revealed as God's chosen method for lifting life from the natural to the spiritual.

iii. It is a revelation of human nature in which the trained faculty of the individual is seen only to have its proper sphere in that *service* of God and man which constitutes the atmosphere of the Kingdom which is both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Man. Many have been the experiments made by man for the building up of a perfect society. It was the goal sought of man's spirit from the day that the gates of Eden closed behind him. It prompted the building of every city, from Babel of old to the London and New York of today. It was the better side of that megalomania which leads American cities to pad the reports of their decennial census. It prompted the literature of visionary republics from Plato's day to the present. But whereas Empires fall to pieces of their own weight, because of a cohesion sought through the application of external force, the "Kingdom out of the Heavens" is set forth as the Humanity desired by Christ because it is the regnancy of di-

vine principles such as have their authority from within, the authority which moulds by forces which are felt only as the fruit tree feels the rising of the sap.

That is why the two metaphors most used by Christ Himself to describe the society of the redeemed are, first, that of the *Family,* and secondly, that of the *Tree.* In the tree the fruit-bearing is the result of grace at work within; in the Family the law which binds together is the law of love, as distinguished from the servile order which makes efficiency alone its goal.

It is not strange that men have never been able to conceive of a higher ideal, or indeed even to reach the heights which have been thus revealed.

"It is true," writes Professor Le Conte, "that in many ways we have advanced and are still advancing by the use of partial ideals; but this use of partial and relative ideals is itself only a temporary stage of evolution. At a certain stage we catch glimpses of the absolute moral ideals. Then our gaze becomes fixed, and we are thenceforward drawn upward forever. The human race has already reached a point where the absolute ideal of character is attractive. This Divine ideal can never again be lost to humanity."

To a world which had already well nigh ceased to believe in virtue, the vision came as a life-giving thing. To those who had begun to cry out for long and dreamless sleep in death since life was forever sinking back after effort into moral and spiritual failure, and since every city which had

been built up in faith and hope had become as Babylon, a "black nest of rats," it came indeed as the vision of a city arrayed in light descending out of an open heaven.

Even at the hour when all was blackest, those who represented the world's hope, even though it were at the Cross, found strength and solace. The scum of the Roman barracks who nailed the Saviour to the Cross heard from His lips a prayer for their pardon addressed to a Father in the heavens; the dying bandit opened his eyes, glazed in death, upon a Kingdom, and received the assurance of a rest in Paradise; the Roman centurion beheld in the expiring sufferer One who was righteousness incarnate; the scattered and the homeless began to find assurance of a love which gave the words "Son" and "Mother" a deeper meaning than the world had hitherto known.

That vision, we hope to show, has not lost its force in the passing of the years. The picture we ourselves form of Christ may break up again and again, but we shall ever find it true—

> "That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows."

And wherever the "Lonely Man" stands lifted up for the contemplation of mankind, the soul that pauses to behold Him must at last yield Him the homage of the heart and all that the heart contains:

"It is hearts of men You want.—
Not greed and carven tombs, not misers' candles; . .
Look, Lonely Man! You shall have all of us
To wander the world over, where You stand
At all the crossways, and on lonely hills,—
Outside the churches, where the lost ones go!—
And the wayfaring men, and thieves, and wolves,
And lonely creatures, and the ones that sing;
We will show all men what we hear and see;
And we will make Thee lift Thy head and smile."

# CHAPTER VII

## THE CHRIST OF HISTORY

"A Person came and lived and loved and did and taught and died and rose again and lives on by His power and His spirit forever within us and amongst us, so unspeakably rich and yet so simple, so sublime and yet so homely, so divinely above us precisely in being so divinely near, that His character and teaching require, for an ever fuller yet never complete understanding, the varying study and different experiments and applications, embodiments and unrollings, of all the races of civilizations, of all the individual and corporate, the simultaneous and successive, experiences of the human race to the end of time."—*The Baron Friedrich von Hügel.*

### SYNOPSIS

Is the answer of Christ explicit in history?—*King Cole*—promise and performance—verdict of hostile critics—verdict of the disappointed—*Christ in Hades*—certain elements of hope properly to be disappointed—error as to the character of the Kingdom—and the speed of its coming—no disappointment to the true disciple.

Survey of the *Gesta Christi*—how men have seen God in Jesus Christ—"the fulness of Him that filleth all in all"—"the acknowledgment of God in Christ"—Christ as the revelation of life—the "Christ-like" life—the pilgrimage of souls—Christ the source of social reform—

*The Light of the World*—the story of civilization the story of Christian progress—how democracy becomes possible—the story of intellectual advance—the story of the outreaching love of God—"the leaves of the tree"—a Temple of Hell—"patriotism is not enough"—the City of God—access to the Tree of Life and the Water of Life.

HOW has the answer which, as we saw in our last chapter, was implicit in the Christ of the Gospels, become explicit in History? This must be the subject of the present chapter.

In a recent poem of John Masefield's, we are introduced to *King Cole,* the spirit of hope and optimism, who comes to the poor, broken-down circus man, piloting his vans through the rain and mire on his way to the next stand. The visitor by his magic transforms the doleful procession into a pageant of life and beauty:

"And all the vans seemed grown with living leaves
And living flowers, the last September knows,
Moist poppies scarlet from the Helcote sheaves,
Green-fingered bine that runs the barley rows,
Pale candy-lips and those intense blue blows
That trail the porches in the autumn dusk,
Tempting the noiseless moth to tongue their musk.
So tired thus, so tended and so sung,
They crossed the city through the unwieldy crowd.
Maids with wide eyes from upper windows hung,
The children waved their toys and sang aloud."

Yet with all this wonder and beauty viewed from without, the circus man sat alone by himself in his van disconsolate, seeing nothing of the splendor:

"But in his van the beaten showman bowed
His head upon his hands, and wept, not knowing
Aught of what passed except that wind was blowing."

How far has the procession of the Church of Christ through history, seen from within or from without, resembled what the crowd saw or what was in the mind of the "beaten showman"? Is there a spirit, no creation of the excited imagination, but the very Spirit of God, which may come, like *King Cole,* to make us see things as they really are?

There can be little or no doubt as to the nature of the demand made by humanity from the beginning. There can be as little doubt as to the claim made by Christ and His disciples that it was within His power and will to satisfy this insistent demand of men: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it abundantly."

After so sanguine a promise, what of the performance?

We shall, of course, all admit, with a kind of sad sincerity, that the influence of Christianity on the world in these past nineteen centuries has been lamentably weakened by the ignorances, frailties, and hypocrisies of its professors. But what of the thing itself?

Some, with evident bias, have framed an indictment against Christianity as something which is in itself hostile to human progress and to human joy. Representative of the one attitude, Voltaire

pointed to the spectacle of the European wars (even as many have done in our own time) with the indignant cry: *Religion chrétienne! voila tes effets!* And, representative of the other attitude, would-be neo-pagans, like Swinburne, have stigmatized the religion of "the pale Nazarene" as destructive of all that joyous and exuberant life which, as they affect to believe, was the abiding atmosphere of ancient Greece.

A much larger class, not ignorant of actual conditions in the "hard, heathen world," to which the religion of Christ spoke of newness of life, yet impatient at the degree or the speed with which the hopes of men have been fulfilled, ask doubtfully as to whether Christ has not after all proved a disappointment. In Stephen Phillips' beautiful poem, *Christ in Hades,* we find at first all the souls of men flocking about the Saviour Who has descended to the world of shades. They feel a "waft of early sweet," and "caught in intolerable hope," they thrill to the sense of all that His victory must mean. Then presently, because He stirred not immediately to unloose their bonds, rather than be left longer to "the bleak magnificence of endless hope," they drift off, one by one, "into the ancient sorrow."

"Yet many could not, after such a sight,
At once retire, but must from time to time
Linger with undetermining bright eyes.
Now at each parting way some said farewell,
And each man took his penance up, perhaps

Less easily from such an interval!
The vault closed back, woe upon woe, the wheel
Revolved, the stone rebounded; for that time
Hades her interrupted life resumed."

Is this a true picture of the world's reaction to the Gospel revelation?

Of course, many elements of human hope had, by reason of imperfect understanding and expression, necessarily to be disappointed. As it was with the Jew after all the waiting for "the fulness of time," so it must inevitably be with the Christian. Those who looked forward to the Christ failed to recognize Him when He appeared. "He came unto His own things, and they that were His own received Him not." Similarly, those to whom Christ has already come are not by any means wholly conscious of the extent and method of His presence.

i. First, many have conceptions as to the character of the Kingdom which are so at variance with facts as to be very properly doomed to disappointment. There are still those who prefer a Messiah who announces Himself as bread-giver, miracle-worker, king of a secular realm, rather than as the spiritual lord of a spiritual world offering the Word of God as sustenance and the Cross as the true path to victory. In such books as *The Call of the Carpenter,* popular a few years ago, it was curiously evident how readily Jesus recommends Himself, even though a failure, as revolutionist instead of as the Saviour from sin.

ii. Then, secondly, there are those who are sadly disappointed because the Kingdom does not come with observation and much more speedily than is obviously the case. Our impatient Americanism cries out, "How long!" more insistently than did the martyr saints of Judaism from beneath the altar. All kinds of schemes are advertised for "speeding up" the "mills of God," some of them mainly dependent upon the using of so much money. There are many today who would have placed themselves on the side of Peter rather than on the side of the Master when the impatient apostle protested against the Cross: "This be far from Thee! This shall not be unto Thee!" Some perhaps might even have been with Judas in the attempt to force Christ's hand.

Such disappointments are inevitable in the case of disciples who have misunderstood Christ's method and His mission, or in the case of the world which from the first has had no understanding at all of either.

Yet to those who have followed Him along the way, and to whom He has revealed His secret, there can be no disappointment. Even to the world in general there can never be disappointment equal to that which occurs inevitably when men who have tried to become citizens of the far country come to themselves and begin to know themselves in want. Even the disappointments of the genuine disciple, moreover, are but the measure of the hope with which the words and the

character of Jesus have inspired them. "We trusted that this was He which should have redeemed Israel," can never be said without some uplift of heart and spirit.

It is our privilege to go further still and show that such a trust has never been falsified. Some may not need the witness of history, since they possess for ever in themselves reason for the confession: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see." But, with this inner witness or without it, it is still helpful to recall to mind the *Gesta Christi* throughout the ages which lie between the first century A. D. and ourselves.

Moreover, in making some survey of what the spirit of Christ has accomplished in the world, we must remember that the spirit of Christ works over a much wider arena than is covered by organized Christianity or even by human instrumentality. The work of Christ is greater than anything accomplished by the Nicene Fathers, greater than the theology of S. Augustine, greater than the reforming zeal of Savonarola, greater than the spirit of Luther. If it be said, as is frequently the case, that in certain ages of Christian history Art or Science or even Religion flourished in spite of Christians rather than because of them, the answer must be that here too Christ was at work. Many a time the things opposed by the purblind Christianity of an age were proofs of the presence of Christ still at work in the world. The Light that lighteneth

every man has shone from many unexpected quarters, quarters sometimes condemned as the abodes of heresy and unbelief and even of atheism. Light has come from the lecture-rooms of skeptical professors, from the laboratories of men of science, from the pulpits of "little Bethels," or from the "posturings and petticoatings" of extravagant ritual.

But let us briefly suggest what these *Gesta Christi* are:

i. Christ has indeed made it possible for men to look upon the face of God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," is a saying which has been most abundantly vindicated. Other religious systems have arisen, Gnosticism to cater to man's pride of intellect, Manichaeanism to offer to men an explanation of the problem of evil, Muhammadanism to give the world what was supposed to be a purer monotheism than that offered by the Churches of the East. But no system added one new truth to theology. Eclectic faiths not a few were propounded, but all proved inorganic and lacking in vitality. In the effort to create a religion more universal than Christianity, religion was made less than Christian. New religious teachers rose from time to time to correct an over-emphasis at one point or to supply a forgotten truth at another. Yet none has succeeded, except for a limited time by the exploitation of a segmentary truth, whereas Christianity for all time stands as witness to Him Who is "the ful-

ness of Him that filleth all in all." Philosophers have criticised the Creeds at one point or another, and have asked for definitions where Christ has given a symbol, but, whereas the exactest definition has become discredited in a generation, the symbol remains for ever as guide to child and philosopher alike along that infinite path which leads at last to God. Human elements have entered into the exposition of Christian conceptions of God, as into the exposition of the record whereby these conceptions have been manifested. Even as Carlyle was repelled from using the "corn" which his friend Emerson sent him, because, ground by the soft mill-stones of England, it became mingled with so much grit as to be uneatable, so the preaching of the Christ has often enough robbed men of the full revelation of the God in Christ. Yet no human misrepresentation, grievous though this has often been, has succeeded altogether in destroying man's access to the Father, however adulterated has been the revelation through the ignorance and the perversity of men.

With so many stupidities due to ignorance, with so much over-exquisiteness of fastidious scholasticism, with so much precise definition where to be precise is to be precisely wrong, with so much exactness of formula where exactness must necessarily be falsification, it is not surprising that the God in Christ is not yet wholly known. Yet the truth remains as ever that—

"The acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise."

ii. As with the revelation of God, so with the revelation of all that we mean by life. Beyond the ideal of the "Christ-like" life, as the goal for human effort, as the resting place towards which the love of God is carrying our weary and reluctant feet, no human imagination has travelled. While, as in the story of the Christ statue which was always just a little above the stature of him who would measure himself against it, the Christ life always seems so near our own as to stimulate our effort, it yet never fails to represent something beyond the attainment of the most consummate sainthood. While natives of India have ridiculed the missionaries of Christ, they have still claimed India for the Christ ideal. While working men, as Dr. R. J. Campbell has reminded us, have hissed the Churches, they have cheered for Jesus. "The most effective taunt that can be levelled at inconsistent Christians is to say that they are unlike their Master," "Jesus seems to sum up and focus the religious ideal for mankind. His influence for good is greater than that of all the masters of men put together and still goes on increasing."

Other ideals of life may allure for the moment, but they reach at last a *cul de sac,* such as inevitably brings the verdict, *Vanitas vanitatum,*

*omnia vanitas.* But in the Christian life the substance is discovered of which all shadows, whether of power, or pleasure, or riches, or knowledge, are, not the mockery, but the assurance and prediction.

To Christ and to the Christ-like life through the ages we have been considering, without distinction of race, or age, or sex, or language, men have turned as to the water springing up unto everlasting life, and have found therein their heart's desire.

> "I came to Jesus and I drank
> Of that life-giving stream;
> My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
> And now I live in Him."

What a long pilgrimage of souls, from S. Paul and Justin Martyr to S. Francis d'Assisi, and from S. Francis to Gordon and Stonewall Jackson, yes, even to Gandhi and General Fêng, have been led to affirm with the great Saint of Hippo: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee."

No one Christian may express it all, and, failing to express the whole, he necessarily feels himself incomplete. But, so far as he expresses Christ at all, he finds himself growing daily into consciousness of a nobler manhood and feels himself both commissioned and empowered to play more worthily his part in life.

iii. Thirdly, whatever have been the defects of individual Christians, Christ has undoubtedly

been for nearly twenty centuries the unfailing source of every stream of social reform by which history has been irrigated. The words of Sir Edwin Arnold, placed upon the prophetic lips of the herald angel at Bethlehem, have been literally fulfilled:

"Foreseeing how this Babe, born lowlily,
Should, past dispute, since now achieved is this—
Bring Earth great gifts of blessing and of bliss;
Date from that crib the Dynasty of Love;
Strip his misused thunderbolts from Jove;
Bend to their knees Rome's Caesars, break the chain
From the slave's neck; set sick souls free again,
Bitterly bound by priests, and scribes, and scrolls;
And heal, with balm of pardon, sinking souls;
Should Mercy to her vacant throne restore,
Teach Right to kings and patience to the poor:
Should by His sweet Name all names overthrow,
And by His lovely words the quick seeds sow
Of golden equities and brotherhood,
Of pity, peace, and gentle praise of good;
Of knightly honor, holding life in trust
For God and Lord and all things pure and just;
Lowly to Woman; for Maid Mary's sake
Lifting our sister from the dust to take
In homes her equal place, the Household's Queen,
Crowned and august who sport and thrall had been;
Of arts adorning life, of charities
Gracious and wide, because the impartial skies
Roof one race in; and poor, weak, mean, oppressed,
Are children of one bounteous Mother's breast,
One Father's care."

Other things, no less parts of the purpose of God, have, of course, entered into the effort of organized Christianity to swell the great volume of

human labor for the amelioration of social conditions, but it will not be denied that the enthusiasm for humanity which has had in the main such fruitful results during the past nineteen centuries is, in very truth,—

> "the wave
> Of love which set so deep and strong
> From Christ's (still) open grave."

Still the larger number of social reformers are to be found in the ranks of Christian believers; still social reform derives its main motive from the religion of the Incarnation; still the courage to go on and endure in the often disheartening effort to lessen the ills of life beneath the sun springs from the optimism and hope of Christian faith.

All human instincts for freedom and fellowship, the very first stirrings of generous impulse to be embodied by and by in systems of chivalry, all aspirations everywhere for the pressing "on to the bounds of the waste, on to the City of God," all things included, under whatsoever disguise, in what we understand as Progress,—have found at once their first incentive, their propulsive force, their pathway and their goal, in that conception of human brotherhood which Christ has revealed, —the corollary of the doctrine of God as Father.

To detail separately the *Gesta Christi* which justify us in making so sweeping an assertion, would be to do nothing less than to write the story of civilization in its entirety with special eye to

the principles which both suggest and sustain all stages of reform.

It would be to tell the story of the fight made for physical freedom, the fight waged and won by the spirit which brought about the triumph of Jesus on the Cross, establishing all along the line those recognized gains to human happiness which broaden out from precedent to precedent.

It is the story of gigantic evils, such as slavery, overthrown, not by revolutionary forces acting from without, but by the operation of principles fermenting within the body itself. It is the story of the abolition of tyrannies and despotisms, not through the protests of an angry serfdom, mighty to destroy but powerless to reconstruct, but rather by the awakening of the common man to know his kinship with God through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. So democracy becomes possible, not because of the tyranny of numbers superseding the tyranny of privilege, but through each man's sense of infinite worthfulness to God through Christ.

It is, again, to tell the story of the sun-rise of intellectual and spiritual freedom, the gradual dispelling of the night shadows of ignorance and superstition. The foundation and maintenance of schools and universities are all incidents in the effort to follow Christ as the Truth. Such following has necessarily included its conservatives who feared the loss of what had been already won, and its radicals eager to press on to those other

things the Spirit must still lift above the world's horizon. But, whether the wisdom was the goad which pricked men on or the nails which fastened them in secure allegiance to what had already been attained, the pursuit of truth was but a synonym for the following of Christ. To serve God with all the mind was as laudable an ambition as to serve Him with body or with spirit. Thus was the desire for more light nourished in the bosom of the Church, until the whole community became in this respect the Church by taking over the responsibility for that instruction which had been for so long the prerogative of the Church alone.

Once again, it is to tell the story of the Love of God reaching out everywhere, by means of human hands, to touch humanity at every one of its many sores. It is the story of the building of hospitals and the establishing of almshouses, of the gradually growing sense of responsibility for prisoners and the insane, for the feeble-minded and defective, for the needy of every sort. If these, too, represent institutions which the modern state deems its own peculiar charge, apart from the efforts of organized religion, let us remember that it was Christian sympathy which forced men to see the necessity for care of this kind, and that the withdrawal of that sympathy, out of supposed sufficiency of scientific efficiency, would speedily destroy the value of much that is at present being accomplished. Let us add, too, that, since "the

leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations," still outside the walls of the City of God, the extension of works of mercy, as in the case of the Red Cross, and all forms of welfare work, to heathen lands, is still one of the fruits of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

As such conclusions emerge naturally from the historical survey of the past, so do they arise out of a present-day survey of what is being accomplished wherever the agents of Christ are at work bearing their proper witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit among men. On a recent visit to China, I entered in a certain city one of the temples for the worship of the City God, fitly enough known as the "Temple of Hell." All around three sides of the court-yard were the stucco groups representing the torments of the damned in the ten departments of the infernal regions, but, terrible as these representations were, far more terrible were the swarms of lepers and other victims of loathsome disease, while on the flagstones lay the sick and dying covered with flies and in some cases at the last gasp. All these were absolutely uncared for, while the glances of the crowd were given to some juggler in the corner of the court rather than to the suffering. Neither the efficiency of modern Chinese business, nor the enlightenment of modern Chinese education, not to mention the boasted progress of modern Chinese republicanism, had one gesture of consolation or help for these miserable victims of neglect. Only the repre-

sentatives of Christ had sympathy to offer. All over that land and over all the other backward countries of the world, it is Christ alone Who moves, even as He moved in Galilee of old, to comfort and relieve, to cure the body, enlighten the mind, and save the soul. That is why there is still a place for Jesus in the foulest haunts of earth,—

> "till e'en the witless Gadarene,
> Preferring Christ to swine, shall feel
> That life is sweetest when 'tis clean."

Lastly, it is important to note that the movements which are striving today to carry men beyond the narrowness of nationalism and away from the limitations of a merely chauvinistic patriotism, are, at least in inspiration, Christian movements. As Christ, on the Cross, drew all men unto Him, so the truest martyrs of patriotism have known and affirmed that "Patriotism is not enough." Men may fail over and over again to secure a wise and effective internationalism. Leagues and Covenants may from time to time be propounded, only to break down in operation through the wilfulness and pettiness of human nature. Those who recommend them and plead for them may for a long time to come seem to be politically impotent, and the professional politician may feel himself secure in despising the forces he opposes as things visionary and impracticable. But after every defeat, the spirit which is seeking the realization of the doctrine of hu-

man brotherhood, just because it is the spirit of Jesus, will rise purified and strengthened to the task before it. In the end the victory of the Lamb over the Dragon, the Wild Beast, and the False Prophet, must be manifest. Men will go on worshipping, it may be, for awhile the Beast which has been overcome, still putting their trust in the discredited idols of force and fraud, but it will be to their own shaming. Moreover, out of such shaming must come at last penitence, change of mind, and return to Christ.

So at length the vision of perfection and redeemed humanity as a City shall be realized. As a dream, almost as a mirage, such a vision has hung before the eyes of men from the beginning. Again and again have men created communities within which they expected to find all social perfection, with all the strength and joy and sufficiency that they had yearned for. But, again and again, the realization had been frustrated by sin, and many learned to say, as a Camelot, "Lord, there is no such city anywhere." Yet the world's idealists continued to come forth from Ur, and Sodom, and Babylon, and Nineveh, and Rome, "to plant the great Hereafter" anew in the desert, confident that the desert should at length blossom as the rose.

In a world so transformed should at last appear the "continuing city," built from earth upwards, yet coming downward from the heavens, the city of principles eternally regnant in heaven,

the world of being, now to triumph in the earth, the realm of becoming.

That City, is, in very truth, among us, and through its wide-opened gates the glory of the nations is already passing. The history of the ages at whose story we have glanced is the history of this gradually increasing revelation. Already the light of those walls, compacted of every variety of preciousness, but blended into the one, white, perfect ray, has attracted the longing eyes of men. Already within these walls all the pilgrims of time may find that for which their hearts have craved, even the presence of God, access to the Tree of Life and the Water of Life, freedom from sin and the fear of death, happy fellowship in the service which springs spontaneously from the love of God and man.

It remains now to make sure of the consummation of so fair and auspicious a beginning, the consummation which shall carry on the story of mankind upon this earth to the point when man, having learned to know—

> "himself a child
> Set in this rudimental star
> To learn the alphabet of Being,"

shall, continuing to grow, advance at last

> "in manhood's prime,
> To walk in some celestial clime;
> Sit in the Father's House, and be
> An inmate of Eternity."

# CHAPTER VIII

## "THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE"

"Come, O Thou that hast the seven stars in Thy right hand, appoint Thy chosen priests according to their order and courses of old, to minister before Thee, and duly to dress and pour out the consecrated oil into Thy holy and ever-burning lamps. Thou hast sent out the spirit of prayer upon Thy servants over all the earth to this effect, and stored up their voices as the sound of many waters about Thy throne. . . . O perfect and accomplish Thy glorious acts, for men may leave their works unfinished, but Thou art a God; Thy nature is perfection. . . . The times and seasons pass along under Thy feet, to go and come at Thy bidding; and as Thou didst dignify our fathers' days with many revelations, above all their foregoing ages since Thou tookest the flesh, so Thou canst vouchsafe to us, though unworthy, as large a portion of Thy Spirit as Thou pleasest; for who shall prejudice Thy all-governing will? Seeing the power of Thy grace is not passed away with the primitive times, as fond and faithless men imagine, but Thy Kingdom is now at hand, and Thou art standing at the door, come forth out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth; put on the visible robes of Thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which Thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee; for now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."—*Milton.*

SYNOPSIS

Mr. Wells on the religion of the future—Is Christianity a "specialised form?"—the significance of our dissatisfaction with religion as it is—the spur of discontent among the assets of religion—our misuse of the records of revelation—opposition to the doctrine of evolution—misconceptions as to the Church—and the Ministry—and Sacraments—and Creeds—dissatisfaction with the fruits of religion in the lives of Christians—our impulses strong and our sense of obligation weak—our slow advance from obsolete and outworn expressions of religion—"the Tree of Faith"—our sectional and sectarian Christianity—the limitations of national religion.

The program for the future—need of a united Christianity—theories of unity—by absorption—by subjugation—by federation—unity in harmony—"the ship that found herself."

Wanted, a Catholic Christianity—no element of witness to be lost in passing through us—"on broken pieces of the ship"—"the whole counsel of God."

Wanted, a spiritual Christianity—recent tendencies towards "efficiency"—the evils of over-organization—"the story of a commercial clergyman."

"How it strikes a contemporary"—the mountain and the dew—the foundations not cast down—the building of the New Jerusalem.

IN the concluding pages of his *Outline of History* Mr. H. G. Wells, in prophetic mood, ventures upon the statement that the future world-state will be based upon a common world religion. Of this religion, after his usual dogmatic fashion, the writer declares: "This will not be Christianity, nor Islam, nor Buddhism, nor any such specialized form of religion, but religion it-

self pure and undefiled; the Eightfold Way, the Kingdom of Heaven, brotherhood, creative service, and self-forgetfulness."

Mr. Wells' reference to Christianity as a "specialized form of religion" shows as limited a conception of Christianity as does Mr. Hardy's description of Christianity as "a local thing." One need not here ask whether the distinguished novelist includes in his list of the elements necessary to make "religion pure and undefiled" all that Christianity claims to be, but one may fairly ask which of the five elements named as essentials is not present in Christianity even as generally understood and presented. Of course, if Christianity be a "specialized form of religion," all that we have said in earlier chapters falls at once to the ground. On the other hand, it should be obvious to those who have read these chapters that the assertion is a complete begging of the question, against the evidence of every claim made for Christianity by its Founder and its very character as contrasted with other religious systems.

Of course, this enunciation of what Christianity is ideally and potentially will always appear to be rising up in judgment against the spectacle of what Christianity is at the present stage of its career. The ideal, in this present world, must ever be the enemy of the real, the best the enemy of the good, the part must seem to be the contradiction of the whole. Surely, there is no more certain consequence of the presence of Christianity in the

world or in the heart of the individual than this ever recurring sense of revolt against what has hitherto been attained out of the vision vouchsafed of heights as yet unreached. "Be always displeased," writes S. Augustine, "with what thou art, if thou wouldest attain to that thou wouldest be." No Christian individual but makes his daily appeal from the imperfection he knows and condemns to the fulness promised and assured to him by the operation of divine grace. It is the spirit of Christ itself which cries out for the supersession of the static by the dynamic:

> "Ring out a slowly dying cause,
> And ancient forms of party strife;
> Ring in the nobler modes of life,
> With sweeter manners, purer laws . . .
> Ring in the valiant man and free,
> The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
> Ring out the darkness of the land,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Thus we should place first among the assets which Christianity has placed within our reach, in order that we may aspire to realize among us "the Christ to be," this divine element of dissatisfaction with what at present we know, and do, and are. It is the evidence the world needs that the stream whose source is beneath the altar of sacrifice is still flowing with ever widening tide towards the infinite ocean. It is the evidence we all need that the Holy Spirit is still at work trans-

forming the primeval Chaos into the Cosmos of the divine purpose. For it is important to recollect that our discontent is not with the spring, nor even with the stream, but rather with the soil that discolors, or the banks which obstruct, with the shoals which produce the eddies, the mud that defiles the limpid outflow of the source. Not against Christ, let me repeat, is the complaint of men, so much as against those who, calling themselves Christians, misrepresent both the Master and His message to a world which, in the main, knows Christians only by the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

1. Before casting our eyes forward to the future for a vision of Christianity more reassuring than that suggested by Mr. Wells, let us pass in review some of the many ways in which the failure of Christians has not only excused but even compelled dissatisfaction with the Christianity of today. It will be plain that, as in the old story of Mercury reporting to Jupiter that most of the ills of which men complained as proofs of the divine indifference were perversions of the blessings which the gods had given, so many at least of the most flagrant failures of modern religion have been due to the misunderstanding and the misuse of the means of grace.

i. For a first example, there can be little doubt that the current disbelief, and consequent disuse, of the Bible are in large part due to misuse of the records of the divine revelation by the very

people who profess themselves the defenders of Holy Writ against unbelief.

How wonderful the range and variety of the literature which, by means of history, poetry, law codes, prophetic discourses, proverb, and story, out of the mouth of psalmist and sage, farmer and fisherman, out of the obscure utterances of folk poetry and the ecstasies of unknown men and women, out of the long story of Israel from the early annals of the race to the more personal utterances of her latest teachers,—all, moreover, fused into a single document by the sense of one stedfast purpose shaping itself to the fulfilment of Israel's hope and the world's desire!

And how woeful the waste through the misconception which has preferred the husk to the kernel, and has sought a text-book of science, or the prose of hard, literal, unimaginative "fact," where God has offered the revelation of Himself!

How difficult it has been for men to perceive that even as Christ on earth "without a parable spake nothing unto" the multitudes, so God's method always has been to speak by parables and symbols rather than by the blinding blaze of revelation unconditioned by our human imperfection.

It is, of course, only fair to recognize that, in the discovery of new truth, Christian men and women have not infrequently been among the first to welcome the light as a gift from Him Who said: "I have many things to say unto you, but

ye cannot bear them now." Yet, as in the instance of that strange recrudescence of reactionary exegesis which is at present rallying opposition against the teaching of evolution, not because it has been disproved by science, but because it conflicts with the cosmogony accepted by the Semitic peoples three thousand years ago, many professed Christians are making it exceedingly hard for an educated generation, in America and all the world over, to be at once true to the God Who reveals Himself in Nature and to the God Whose revelation is contained within the pages of the Christian Scriptures. Out of a misconceived reverence for some humanly framed theory of Biblical inspiration, they are willing to place themselves stubbornly athwart the path of honest searchers after truth, and to beget in the minds of these the suspicion that God's revelation of Himself, as asserted in the Christian faith, is founded upon a fraud. It is not strange that religious beliefs built up on foundations of wood, hay, and stubble, yet fanatically guarded as though they were the very palladium of religion, the eternal Rock never to be shaken, should come down with a terrible crash when young people in our schools and colleges begin to test things for themselves. More than occasionally fault is found with our colleges and universities because of the number of students who, midway in their college career, seem to part with their earlier religious beliefs: the fault should rather be placed upon the shoulders of

those who have sent forth these young people with a mischievously inadequate conception of religion, armed, like Don Quixote, with arms of pasteboard, where they ought to have been trained to wield the true "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

ii. With similar unintelligence we have allowed men to misconceive of the meaning and significance of the means of grace specially associated with the Church, its Ministry, its Sacraments, and its Creeds. Some have learned to think of the Church as an ecclesiastical despotism modelled after the administrative system of Imperial Rome and destined to be built up by similar methods of expansion, not without much use of force and fraud. Others have had in mind nothing but the machinery for the exploitation of segmentary truths, a broken mirror giving distorted reflections of the doctrine of Christ, according to the exposition of this or that person or this or that age. Meanwhile, the glorious ideal of the Church as the living Body of Christ, complete in Him, building itself up to the realization of a world-wide society of redeemed men, One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, is but faintly seen.

iii. Subordinate to this misconception of the Church is the misconception of the Christian ministry. On the one hand we find it considered a caste, and on the other hand as a class, man-chosen, man-commissioned, delegates whose main object is to build up a personal following within

the narrow fences of this or that party or this or that denomination. And, in the meantime, how little of the humility which recognizes the privilege of being used to interpret God to Man and Man to God!

iv. Again, we may very well be dissatisfied with our misuse of the Sacraments of the Christian Church. Sometimes we have turned them into mere survivals of those old rites of imitative magic, to which we have made reference, instead of seeing in them the fulfilment of the same; sometimes we have treated them as meaningless pieces of traditional ritualism; sometimes even the tests of party allegiance or of adhesion to a theory. All this, instead of finding in them the approach, by way of love, to the immanence of God in this world of ours, a God Who admits us to union with Himself and feeds us in body and soul out of His own communicable life.

v. Lastly, so far as these grounds of stimulating dissatisfaction are concerned, we adjudge ourselves guilty of the misuse of the Christian Creeds. We employ them not so much for the necessarily approximate formulation of truths to which our minds and spirits reach out by means of symbol, but rather as definitions which have been established with a kind of Quranic finality, to be interpreted with a precision which makes heresy of all advancing understanding and appreciation. Or else we use them, or misuse them, after the manner of archaic documents, to be disregarded

or denied at pleasure, and as having no vital significance to the unity and stability of the Body of Christ.

2. Our confidence in the validity of the Christian message forces us to the acknowledgement of a second class of reasons for discontent, associated, not, as in the above cases, with the misuse of the means of grace, but our manifest failure to grow up as Christians in such a way as to furnish a fair record of the Christ life, or to supply to men some inkling of the possibilities of human life within the Church.

Let us not mistake. Christians are termed in the New Testament "*saints,*" not for what they are, but for what they are capable of becoming. The Christian ideal is always a flying goal, unreached yet ever sought. Not even the character of the saintliest is "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The failures, moreover, of Christians are frequently only the inevitable slips of these forced to the apostolic confession: "The good that I would I do not; the evil that I would not, that I do."

> "Oh, he knows what defeat means, and the rest,—
> Himself the undefeated that shall be;
> Failure, disgrace, he flings them you, to test
> His triumph in eternity."

Yet there is a failure which is never confused, even by the world, with the lapses of those whose attitude is always deliberately Christwards. There is a loss of ideals, a sinking back to conformity

with the fashions of the world, a measuring of ourselves by ourselves, and a comparing of ourselves among ourselves, a practical surrender to the world in all that is spiritually distinctive. The religious impulse may still survive, and at times stir us to unwonted depths of our nature in the direction of remorse and renewed resolution. But we find ourselves incapable, nevertheless, of sustained sense of obligation. Where the world and Christ conflict, the world wins easily and the claims of Christ are put aside for that which is convenient. This, too, the world, not unwilling to pay Christianity the compliment of placing its ideals high, notes, and draws thence for itself the conclusion that Christianity no longer possesses the old compelling power which rescued the most desperate sinners from their sins, in spite of the power and habit of the sin, in spite of the prevailing standards of place and age.

Nor must we forget that there are men and women not a few who come to the Church's door with the appeal upon their lips, "We would see Jesus," only to find, through the association with Christians, a cooling of their enthusiasm, and a blurring of that vision of the Christ which had captivated their soul. Where ideals have long ceased to live, even if not repudiated, the profession of religion, not only without reality, but veneered disgustingly with hypocritic cant, becomes only too possible. The slackened sense of obligation within the Church leavens inevitably

with evil the life of the world outside, and the public sins of professing Christians become destructive to themselves and stumbling-blocks to others.

3. In the next place, we cannot but be deeply concerned at the slow and reluctant steps we take away from outworn and obsolete embodiments of the religious spirit. Too often we seem to prefer the empty shells and cast-off husks of truth rather than the following of that living spirit which is ever seeking restatement and ever leading on to a new order and power of life. How often we need to recall and ponder upon those wise words of Whittier:

"The Tree of Faith its bare, dry boughs must shed,
That nearer Heaven the living ones may climb:
The false must fail, though from the shores of Time
The old lament be heard, Great Pan is dead.
That wail is Error's from her high place hurled,
This sharp recoil is evil undertrod,
The Time's unrest an angel sent from God,
Troubling with Life the waters of the world.
Even as they list the winds of the Spirit blow,
To turn or break our century rusted vanes,
Sands shift and waste; the rock alone remains
Where, led of Heaven, the strong tides come and go,
And storm-clouds, rent of thunderbolt and wind,
Leave, free from mist, the permanent stars behind."

This, moreover, applies not only to intellectual but also to very practical questions. The persistence with which tribal and national conceptions of religion cling to the skirts of our Church life is extremely discouraging to those who do not

look far back and far forward. The history of Christianity has too often been the story of clashing segments of a potential catholicity. The philosophic East clashed with the practical West, leading to the result that movements which might have been welcomed as complementary and conducive to comprehensiveness were put under the ban as heresies and condemned as schismatic. How much of the missionary work of the Sixteenth Century in the Orient was marred just because Portuguese Jesuits and Spanish Dominicans could not, even in the presence of the heathen, keep in suppression the tradition of their nationality and their religious order! How many times have the missionary heroes of France and Germany clouded the magnificent witness of their martyrdom by activities which made it difficult to distinguish between the service of the Cross and the service of the flag! Has it not been claimed that an anti-religious French Republic charged itself with the duty of protecting missionaries in the Orient mainly because of the political advantage which was thereby secured? Has it not also been maintained that British missionaries in India have been handicapped rather than helped through their association with the rulers of the land? Do not our American missionaries, too, sometimes regard Christianization as well nigh equivalent to Americanization, and find little with which to sympathize in the national ideals of other countries?

So far we have dealt almost exclusively with that side of our hope for the future which springs from dissatisfaction with the past and the present. The major duty, however, remains, namely to have a real program for the future. The influence of that spur of discontent which enables us to recognize and repent the defects of present-day Christianity is of little use unless it stimulate our determination to realize a Christianity worthy of the Founder and altogether adequate for the needs of the race. Not through the shortening of the Almighty Hand, not through the exhaustion of the sacrificial love of Christ, not through the depleted power of the Holy Spirit, has our religion been slow to move the tides of time, but simply through our own lack of faith and love and zeal.

What, then, are the things we most desiderate, not as some addition of our own devising, now for the first time discovered, but rather as the simpler and sincerer use of what has been all along available out of the infinite resources of the Founder of the Faith?

Let us bring this chapter to a close by speaking of three of the most obvious needs.

1. We need a *united* Christianity. The desire for this is, of course, nothing less than the desire to fulfil the Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one." But men have sought for unity in very various ways. There has prevailed with some the belief that unity is to be secured by blending all representations of Christianity into one homogen-

eous and unorganized system, all things, being reduced to the lowest common denominator, just as hail, snow, ice, and vapor are reduced to the common element of water. On this theory all those distinctive truths which, while they have separated men into denominations, have yet exercised a saving virtue, are made nebulous and undiscernible. What was intended to be a Body becomes a mere jelly.

Others have sought a basis for unity by way of subjugation, by the compelling of all other forms to yield to the authority of one. It is a theory more widely held than is often suspected, since the tyranny which expects unity "by way of subjection" may be as characteristic of the tiniest (often the most unreasonable) sect as of the Holy Roman Empire. There are many other Papacies than that which governs from the Vatican. The dogmatism of an individual may be even more distasteful than the pronouncements of a Council.

Still another theory is that of federation, in which different bodies remain content with piecemeal creeds and methods, yet at the same time are bound together by that tenuous thread of tolerance which makes creed and cult alike of little account.

By all these several paths unity is manifestly unrealisable, fortunately so, since unity brought about by wrong premises must be inevitably mischievous. In the unity which God Himself desires there is no losing of oneself, but rather the find-

ing of the full self meet for communion with God. In the obedience required by loyalty there is no servile subjugation to the will of God, but rather the free coöperation of sons. We may be very sure that the shattering of ecclesiastical unity which resulted from an attempt to impose upon the Church the administrative system of the old Roman Empire, a system in which the individual had no rights, was but the Church's legitimate effort to recover for herself the liberty of the sons of God. Equally is it true that the riot of individualism which marked the return swing of the pendulum must not be regarded otherwise than as the seizure of an opportunity by the enfranchised mind and spirit to learn once more the corporate life by a voluntary submission to Christ in His Church.

The synthesis of the two movements is to be found in the unity which results from the attainment of harmony, the unity so wonderfully described in S. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (iv 15-16) as the growing up of the Church "in all things unto Him, Who is the Head, even Christ, from Whom all the Body fitly framed together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of every several part, making the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

If we take the time and the pains to consider this particular passage, word by word, we shall see what a wonderful Epiphany this fellowship

of trained individuals, working together in love, must bring to a divided and distracted world.

It would be the creation of a unity like that suggested by Kipling's story of *The Ship that found herself*. First, we see the ship *Dimbula,* newly and strongly built, capable in each of its many parts, yet straining and complaining because no part is self-adjusted to its neighbor. So rivets and deckbeams, stringers and ribs and capstan, and everything else, groan and whine and murmur till one would have supposed the whole ship about to go to pieces. Yet, at last, after weathering a tremendous storm, there comes in the ship a strange lull, out of which comes a new, big, voice. "Who are you?" cries the Steam, and the answer returns, "I am the *Dimbula,* of course, and I've never been anything else but that—and a fool."

2. We look forward to a Church which is not only One but *Catholic.* By this I mean not merely a Church universally diffused and universally accepted, but a Church which has lost no element of the full witness given to us to bear. We are in many respects, in feeling and in some elements of our worship, more Catholic than our many controversies would lead the world to suppose. One has recently said, speaking of what he calls "our separated brethren," "They share with Catholics in reciting the Apostles' Creed, they use the Catholic Scriptures, and sing not a few Catholic hymns; they give to Jesus Christ, Incarnate God,

a passionate devotion, and seek to make His life abundantly available to men not only for individual holiness and beauty and power, but for social ends of world redemption."

All this is true. Nevertheless, the majority of Christians are to-day making so much more of their differences than of their agreements that it is as though they supposed the normal way of getting safe to the land of everlasting life were to float thither upon "broken pieces of the ship." What a spectacle it is, as compared with what might be, to see a whole fleet of rudely constructed and ludicrously navigated rafts and tubs and hencoops, proudly marked with sectarian badges, holding their precarious way upon the sea of life, where all might be coming grandly into port. It is not enough to be shamed into repentance for our discords, we must also be made ashamed of those treasonous eliminations of the elements of truth which appeared to us discordant only because they remained disharmonized. It is something to our credit that sectarian banners are commonly raised only over neglected truths, truths which are transformed into errors by lack of proper correlation. But truncated truths may become exceedingly mischievous, not so much for what they state as for what they leave unstated and thereby seem to deny. The cure for sectarianism is not in a spineless religion without theological affirmation or a sense of order, but rather in that real Catholicity, worthy

of the name because expressive of the thing,—no exploitation of a solitary principle, but the realization, in principle and practice, of "the whole counsel of God."

3. Lastly, we need a Christianity which keeps prominently before the attention of men its genuinely *spiritual* quality. We need not so many wheels but "the spirit within the wheels." The tendency of recent years, particularly since the craze for efficiency came in with the war, has been to make the machinery of religion more and more complicated and to have that machinery driven by technically trained men and women who keep it going by humanly generated forces such as are often startlingly foreign to the spirit of Christ. The craze for up-to-date Church organization, with a multitude of societies to enlist the energies of men, women, and children, ramifying in every direction from the congregation to the nation, claiming the attention of hosts of secretaries and business agents, turning the pastor into a bewildered director of an administrative system, perpetually engaged in inaugurating, sustaining, reviving, and galvanizing into appearance of life of a multiplicity of unnecessary organizations, has done not a little, while stimulating the physical energies of the Church, to diminish its real power and influence in the community. I once read a story by Bradley Gilman, entitled, *Ronald Carnaguay, the Story of a Commercial Clergyman,* which seemed to me like a transcript from

life. I have forgotten the story, but I remember these words of Mr. Gilman's *Foreword*:

> "When a Church and preacher . . . subordinate worship to amusement, and when they test the merit and strength of a church and minister by mercantile standards, then that preacher and people have become commercial and sordid; then the higher vision is withdrawn."

Not a little of the disbelief of the world to-day comes from the consciousness of a Church which is, in its lust for competitive organization, in its foolish habit of depending upon the reputation for statisticalized greatness, in its employment of methods more ingenious than religious to entrap men to the hearing of sensational pieces of self-advertisement, must surely be an offense against God and a blasphemy against Christ.

As soon as we turn the whole force of our ministry and the love and activity of our congregations into the task of spiritualizing the atmosphere of the communities in which we dwell, men will not be slow to appreciate the savor of our witness. To withdraw from the noisier world into the secret place wherein power is generated for the whole world's uses is not to relinquish the service of an active life. It is rather to manifest that new and higher type of activity which is not the less real for being primarily spiritual. Something will happen such as Browning has described in his poem, *How it strikes a contemporary,* where the poor poet, in his shabby suit, becomes recog-

nized as the great, though silent, influence which shapes the affairs of a city:

"If any hurt a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you and expect as much."

So he became known as—

"The town's true master if the town but knew,
We merely kept a governor for form."

And when he came to die, it was clear,—

"Here had been, mark, the general in chief
Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death,
Doing the king's work all the dim day long."

When we grow to this conception of Christian witness, then, as the mountain lifts itself to catch the dew which refreshes the land all the way from the heights of Hermon to the arid hill of Zion, so shall the Church lift herself in sustained prayer into the presence of that divine mystery whence is distilled grace for the helping and the healing of all mankind.

We need have no misgiving as to the future of the Church, provided we be ready and obedient to follow the beckoning hand of the Church's Lord.

Faithful and fearless, gratefully mindful of the past, yet ever confident as to the future, pandering to no man or movement or age or race, yet bearing in her hands unfailing consolation

for all, patient with the frailties of men and with the mysterious providences of God, firm to maintain and free ever to re-state, the Church need never heed the cry of the panic-mongers that "the foundations are being cast down" and that we must therefore "flee as a bird unto their hill."

The vision of the New Jerusalem is in our hearts, and the power to build up on earth according to the pattern revealed from heaven is in our hands. It is ours to resolve, and to work until the resolve be realized:

> "Bring me my bow of burning gold;
> Bring me my arrows of desire;
> Bring me my spear, O clouds, unfold,
> Bring me my chariot of fire!
> I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hands,
> Till I have built Jerusalem
> (Within this) green and pleasant land."

# CHAPTER IX

## THE TRIUMPHANT ISSUE

"Others mistrust and say, 'But time escapes;
Live now or never!'
He said, 'What's time? Leave now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever.' . . . .
Was it not great? did he not throw on God
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did he not magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found or earth's failure:
'Wilt thou trust death or not?' He answered 'Yes.'"

—Browning, *The Grammarian's Funeral.*

"*Quod Deo non perit, sibi non perit.*"—S. Augustine.

## SYNOPSIS

Doubts on two points—the cosmic insignificance of our planet—Can the Universe be Christocentric?—the challenge accepted—the processes of evolution within our mental reach—the universality of the laws we know—no need to be agnostic as to the issue.

Are we limited by terrestrial experience?—a practical question—the question of immortality not an academic one—how life climbed out of the water—how it may climb out of the present bondage to matter.

In the interest of present values—why man needs "to be continued in our next"—the orchard of ripe plums—the proper place of "other-worldliness"—the terrestrial interest of religion—"on earth as it is in heaven"—"a new and better world."

Yet in itself unsatisfactory—material progress a new anthropocentricism—"I care for nothing, all shall go"—Is the human victory illusory?

The need of a transcendental *patria*—"*Quaere super nos*"—the purposive nature of man.

Views as to the future life—lack of finality in our conceptions—character of the misconceptions—and the result—how we remain the slaves of our metaphors—what we expect of heaven.

Relation to the doctrine of the Incarnation—human faculty lifted up into the life of God—fulness of love—of knowledge—of work—"our heart's desire."

Limitations of Browning's presentation—from the anthropocentric to the Christocentric—our place in the Cosmos.

The philosophy of the *Divina Commedia*—"the love that moves the sun and the other stars"—an educable universe—the place of judgment in the moralizing of life—three attitudes of the human will to the divine purpose—the *Inferno*—the *Purgatorio*—the *Paradiso*—divine respect for personality—the Hound of Heaven—God's fidelity to His primal purpose—the Divine insistence on the relation of the individual to the whole—the paradox of multiplicity in unity—sin a failure in fellowship—purgatory education in fellowship—Paradise the fullness of fellowship—"What does it take to make a rose?"—the greatness of the vision—God's witness in the dark—our contemplation of the goal—"Worthy is the Lamb!"—"Hallelujah to the Maker!"

IN the following of our argument up to the present point, doubts have probably occurred to the reader with respect to two things. First, is it thinkable that in a Universe in which, as we now conceive it, distances must be reckoned by light years rather than in millions of miles, our so shrunken system can possibly have attributed to it so much importance as to warrant us in saying that the drama of humanity can ever be anything more than a very insignificant episode in the cosmic epic? Secondly, is it thinkable that out of infinite tracts of time corresponding in their immeasurable vastness to the infinity of space, the one human Life to which we have assigned central position can justly claim that focal importance, as set forth in the vision of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation, or pictorially in the great Altar-piece of Ghent? In other words, in taking such a position, may we not be returning to the old geocentric and anthropocentric cosmogony of pre-Copernican days, and reverting to obsolete views as to the significance of the history of the Jews among the nations of the world?

I do not think we need fear either challenge. The great expression points of evolution, even when outside the field of history, are not beyond our mental reach. If we can reach back mentally to conceive of that crossing of the Rubicon in Nature involved by the transition from atom to cell, and again from body to mind, there is no occasion for disowning, out of a kind of mock humil-

ity, the crossing of the line which separates the human from the divine, through God's completer projection of Himself into our world and the lifting up of humanity to God. It seems just as legitimate to credit Evolution with the securing of new values as to emphasize the conservation of values already revealed.

This history of other parts of the Universe we may not know, nor the conditions under which life prevails, if indeed it does prevail. But, starting from that first-hand knowledge of self which sets us forth along the road, and using the powers of observation and generalization by which our knowledge grows from more to more, we do get scientific warrant for believing that the same laws *do* operate throughout the universe. In such case, that law of sacrifice, which, as we have seen, is the law of Creation as well as the law of Redemption, makes the "slain Lamb" not merely the symbol of an historic fact but the illustration in time of an universal law. It is no true humility to deny the laws we see at work in the chemistry of a drop of water because we fear to assume their relation to the elements in other worlds. Agnostic as we must needs be in many things, there is no need to be agnostic in the face of revelations which come from God, whether they come through the observation of nature or through the experience of grace. Sir Oliver Lodge seriously understates the intimations we have of human destiny when he writes as follows:

"Our present state may be likened to that of the hulls of ships submerged in a dim ocean among many strange beasts, propelled in a blind manner through space; proud perhaps of accumulating many barnacles as decoration; only recognizing our destination by bumping against the dock wall. With no cognizance of the deck and the cabins, the spars and the sails; no thought of the sextant and the compass and the captain; no perception of the lookout on the mast, of the distant horizon; no vision of objects far ahead, dangers to be avoided, destinations to be reached, other ships to be spoken with by other means than by bodily contact;—a region of sunshine and cloud, of space, of perception, and of intelligence, utterly inaccessible to the parts below the water-line."

Undoubtedly, some part of our nature is thus below the water-line, but to suppose this is true of the whole is as derogatory to the Evolution which uses our deliberate and purposeful planning as well as the accidents of life as it is to the conception of the Creator's relation to His world.

The question which immediately concerns us in the present chapter is this. Does the plan, whose curve in a certain direction our study of history enables us to discern, extend beyond the terrestrial sphere? Is it true, from the "august anticipations, hopes, and fears" of our present experience, that our real self demands for its proper destiny something which must necessarily transcend its terrestrial manifestation?

It is a question which requires consideration for practical considerations of the first importance.

We may never be able to demonstrate scientifically the continuance of personal existence beyond the grave, although in recent years men of science not a few have become more and more sanguine as to such a possibility. But independently of the reality or unreality of communications with the dead, and independently of all arguments of a strictly scientific character, the theory of personal survival is so reasonable and so much in accord with the demands and intuitions of our nature, that the shaping of the present life on any other hypothesis must inevitably limit the range of our hopes. According to Dr. Hoffding, of Copenhagen, the whole progress and course of evolution is to increase and intensify the valuable, "and it does so by bringing out that which was potential or latent, so as to make it actual and real."

In any case, the denial, in the name of science, of the possibility of persisting personality is gratuitous. As Mr. Wells points out in the early part of his *Outline of History,* there was a point in the evolution of life when that life was associated with water, as its home, its medium, and its fundamental necessity. It seemed demonstrable that life must perish as soon as living things learned to climb above the water-line, just as jelly-fish dry up and perish on the sea-beaches. Yet there was some instinct in the climbing which proved victorious over the menace of death. Life did climb and succeeded in adjusting itself to

other conditions beyond the water-line. It is at least as reasonable to believe that this will prove true of the life which has become valuable enough to the cosmic purpose to pass beyond the conditions of its present physical organism. As Mr. J. A. Hadfield has put it:

"The mind may henceforth become indifferent to the disasters which, in the course of nature, are bound to overtake the body, and may hope to survive its destruction and decay—and perhaps thereafter to find or create for itself a 'spiritual body' adapted to a different sphere of existence and to other modes of life."

All this, however, is a little foreign to the method of this chapter, which is to direct attention, in the interest of present values, to the bearing of the doctrine of immortality upon our conception of the cosmic plan and our own attitude towards the process of its fulfilment.

Man is, if the highest of created things, the most unfinished, considering the extent and degree of his ambitions and desires. We must confess with *Cleon*:

"We know this, which we had not else perceived,
That there's a world of capability
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
And still the flesh replies, 'Take no jot more
Than ere thou climbest the tower to look abroad!"

Nothing in nature needs so much as man the parenthetic notice at the close of the mortal chapter, *"To be continued in our next."*

Otherwise the question occurs insistently, Is re-

ligion after all just a soporific, to keep us up to our several tasks for a few short years, serving Nature's obscure and possibly suicidal purpose, deluding the individual with the dream of a moral progress for which life is inadequate, and the race with a vision of a millennium which the planet will regard indifferently, but all really to keep the poor more or less content with their lot and the strong secure in their privilege? One is reminded of the Chinese Emperor who deceived his thirsty army, passing through a desert, and at the same time carried out his own plan of campaign, by telling the troops that just beyond the day's march was a fine orchard of ripe plums. There were no plums, but the thought of plums so made their mouths water that the thirst was temporarily assuaged. Is Nature dealing thus with us? Or are we keeping up the fiction of another life for policy's sake of our own, to console the unfortunate and to restrain the wicked?

Of course, we must be very careful not to give undue and misplaced prominence to this doctrine of a future life. The kind of "other-worldliness" which has been sometimes preached as Christianity seriously misrepresents the teaching of Christ. The Christian who sings, or talks, overmuch about being "weary of earth," not only gives reason for throwing suspicion upon his sincerity, but, if sincere, may be likened to the philosopher who as a result of overmuch star-gazing fell into a well at his feet.

We cannot accept the belief of Rudolph Eucken that as the Beyond has retired more and more into the background, we have needed it less and less, and that the doctrine of immortality has lost its firm roots in the soul of the modern man. But we can most unreservedly accept his statement that since our life must be rooted in an order raised above time, "it can only reach its more inner meaning through work in time and the experiences of time." "That such a change sets the immortality problem in quite another light is plain without further discussion."

It must be kept clear that the Christian religion has a very definite terrestrial interest. There was a definite promise in the song of the angels at Bethlehem that the coming of Christ meant "peace on earth to men of good will." The preaching of "the Kingdom" was distinctly the proclamation of an order which, though heavenly in origin, was to be set up on earth. The Lord's Prayer makes emphatic reference to the need that God's Name must be hallowed, His Kingdom come, His Will be done, "on earth, as it is in heaven." As seen by the Apocalyptist, the City of God does not bear the redeemed away into the heavens, but comes down from thence "like a bride arrayed for her husband."

Hence the effort of the true Christian must necessarily be to make what is called "a new and better world." It must be the concern of the Christian and of the Church to induce the manifesta-

tion of better business, better politics, better social conditions, better education, a wider extension of happiness and health. The effort to transform will be itself transforming. The very vision of the future life must be turned to account, not by intensifying our dissatisfaction with the present, but to flood with light from the High and Holy Place the darkest corners of the earth in which our lot is cast. Men will believe most in a heaven to come when they see its ideals operating for the celestializing of terrestrial conditions. So Dr. R. A. Holland finds his vision of the future vindicating itself in the present:

"Even now its streets turn to gold under errands of duty; and its meanest hovels shine like celestial mansions when the heavenly Father's children are greeted in their doorways; and its works, and cares, and sympathies,—the farm, the shop, the mill, the wharf, hospitals and schools and hustings and council chambers and halls of justice,—all have tints and lustres that fit them for foundation gems in the City of God. Immortality has begun."

Yet in itself the humanizing and Christianizing of a terrestrial civilization must remain a very inadequate goal. To speak of Progress, understanding it with these limitations, can only be to envisage a new type of geocentric philosophy to supersede the old. All that we can ever boast of in the way of progress, be that progress physical, intellectual, or spiritual, is ultimately waste of time if Nature, which has begun by being our mother, is at last to prove the undertaker who

buries her children, self-slain, out of her sight. Our own planetary history, and therefore everything which is confined within its limits, is demonstrably secular. However much we plan for Progress and boast of the Progress won, we can scarcely fail to be haunted by the spectre of the final failure, when a cooling sun removes the last possibility of continued terrestrial life. Whether the ultimate catastrophe be delayed millions or trillions of years is of comparatively small importance in comparison with the verdict which is rendered. In the light of hopes excited, enterprises commenced, struggles to carry on the soul's desire through all experiences of sacrifice and pain, how ironical to say of the Divinity which made possible so much frustrated faith, and hope, and love, "This One began to build, but was not able to finish."

Or must we postulate of Nature something worse than powerlessness, namely, the indifference which cries: "I care for nothing, all shall go"?

In either case, what becomes of all the edifices, material and moral alike, which have been so painfully reared through aeons of struggle? In the light of the final failure, is the effort to carry the development of charcter a little above the savage plane a matter of any moment? "Why urge the long, unequal fight?" if the victory towards which we have fought our way is but an illusion?

So we see how inevitably the question reacts

upon our sense of present values. It is made plain that, unless we connive at our own delusion, we must look beyond the fate of the planet to find the sufficient stimulus for the doing of the things we instinctively feel to be worth the doing. As Humboldt, when present at an earthquake in South America, turned his eyes from the quivering earth to the waters of the unquiet sea and from thence lifted them up to the serene and unshaken sky, so, when disturbed overwhelmingly by the sense of this world's transitoriness, we must look beyond for a *Pou Sto,* even to gain courage for the next step. There is a story of S. Augustine of Hippo that one day walking by the sea shore towards evening, he began to interrogate his soul. "Why dost thou sigh? Why art thou sad?" A voice which seemed to come from the water answered: "Seek beyond thyself." So the saint lifted up his eyes to the stars and said to them, "Tell me why my soul is sad." Out of the assembled constellations came again the answer, *"Quaere super nos."* S. Augustine lifted up his soul still higher to the angelic host and put his question yet again, and again the answer was returned, *"Quaere super nos."* So he knew at last that beyond the material universe, at its primal source, was to be found the response to the cravings of his nature.

It is a great help to be thus guided, by the immanence of God in our very being, beyond the transitory and the imperfect to that which is alike

the Source and the Goal of life, to be reassured that "the purposive nature of man," as Professor William McDougall of Harvard has recently written, "the predominance of mind in the later stages of the evolutionary process, the indications of purposive striving at even the lowest levels, the combination of marvellous persistency of type with indefinite plasticity," are all predictive of a destiny beyond the material universe.

The development of this predictive element is of course slow, and here, more than in most cases, it is essential that we be exceedingly wary, lest in clinging to the outworn things (the *superstitiones*) we miss the succeeding stages of revelation. It is therefore wise, as Eucken reminds us, to "rule out any representation of the exact mode of continuance." "In order to avoid a pantheistic evaporation of the soul-life, we ought not to let ourselves be driven into an obstinate dogmatism as to the particular mode of life at present existing; we have reverently to respect the secret which lies over these things and understand that all which is asserted about the indoor details of the future life can be nothing more than mere image and simile."

The insistence upon the retention of certain outworn ideas as descriptive of the life to come has created in the minds of many sheer distaste and disgust. It is quite important to remark that as many people are bored, if not frightened, at the conception of the Christian heaven as are

terrified at the thought of the Christian hell. Our truly pitiful ideas as to what constitutes service, worship, and joyous abundance of life have quite logically made the thought of such continuing indefinitely a hideous boredom. The request of the child, trained in the hard school of sabbatarian religion, "Mother, if I'm good, do you think I shall be allowed to go from heaven on Saturdays to play in hell?" reflects the natural result of such conceptions.

So we get that shrinking from wrong conceptions of immortality which is often confused with the shrinking from immortality itself. It is quite easy to see that such errors, whether throwbacks to an earlier stage of belief or the nightmares of our own saddling, coming at a time when our sense of failure is strong and the courage for renewed effort weak, must now and then produce moods such as are expressed in the lines of Robert Buchanan:

"Perchance He will not wake us up, but when
He sees us look so happy in our rest,
Will murmur, Poor dead women and dead men,
Dire was their doom and weary was their quest—
Wherefore awake them unto life again?
Let them sleep on untroubled, it is best."

Or the still gloomier and more rebellious lines of James Thomson in *The City of Dreadful Night*:

"We do not ask a longer term of strife,
Weakness, and weariness, and nameless woes;
We do not claim renewed and endless life,
When this which is our torment here shall close,

An everlasting, conscious inanition!
We yearn for speedy death in full fruition,
Dateless oblivion and divine repose."

Of course, when the present life has become "an everlasting, conscious inanition," one wants no more of it. Thus we are taken straight back to the atmosphere of earlier times when the intuitions of men regarding the future were so little valued, —when even for a while (as under Yahwism) teaching respecting the future was suspended, till a new sense of the quality of life could be imparted by a quickened belief in man's kinship with God. In order to escape this reaction from a misconceived finality in the doctrine of the future life, we must be always pressing on from the symbol to the thing symbolized.

As in the advance from primitive religion men began to have higher hopes than those for the gathering place of ancestral shades, or for the happy fields where hunting and fighting were life's main activities, and it was a pleasure to quaff mead from the skulls of one's enemies; as in Zoroastrian religion heaven became a series of spheres graded to reward men for particular kinds and degrees of merit ritually acquired; and as in Buddhism and Hinduism men passed on to a conception of heaven all too perilously accessible to the assaults of Karma, dragging the soul down again into the vortex; so in the Christian dispensation men have passed under the tyranny of the very symbols they required for their concep-

tion of the life of blessedness, and have needed emancipation from the same.

In the first Christian centuries these conceptions were crude in the extreme, holdovers from various stages of Jewish eschatology, intrusions from the mythology of Greece and Rome, millennial dreams from the Far East. Many held views as materialistic as the one described by Papias wherein the Kingdom was little but the gigantic vine with a thousand branches, each branch with a thousand bunches of grapes, and each grape bursting with a superabundance of delicious wine. There was little to choose between the heaven of this pattern and that of Muhammad which so well recommended itself to the Arabs.

To these ideas we are still so close as inevitably to suffer from the literalism with which so many are content. It is astonishing to find how much the "eternal primitive" still demands of God reward in the shape of actual harps, and crowns, and palms, and robes, and streets of gold.

But, coincident with the crudest literalism, we find real lines of aspiration suggested, in accordance with our several needs.

To one, heaven is essentially rest, after toil, the folding of quiet hands after a life-time of cark, and care, and grinding drudgery.

To another it is the aspiration towards fuller activity, after a life of restraint and frustrated effort.

To another it means fuller knowledge, after a vain beating against the enticing mysteries of existence.

To another, hampered and fettered by the clogging weight of a besetting sin, it speaks of freedom, advance in moral strength, and holiness.

To another it means greater amplitude of life; to another greater fulness of joy; and to still another larger opportunities of fellowship. No symbols, however faulty, can completely disguise the essential validity of these aspirations after life, since all ask for fulness and "the glory of going on and still to be."

It is ours to recognize the wonderful way in which Christianity has stimulated the desire and quest for these things and at the same time spiritualized the terms in which these desires are expressed.

This is, of course, the result of the proclamation of the Incarnation. The enlargement of human life to touch the life of God is the immediate consequence of a doctrine revealing how God has stooped to have contact vitally with His world. There is no longer reason for being jealous of the immortal gods, keeping to themselves the draught of immortality and refusing the least drop of an overflowing chalice to men. A divine fulness has become our right, since God has established His right to immanence in Creation.

It is on this ground of the Incarnation that

Browning in particular, among modern poets, has insisted so passionately on life's enlargement. Love must necessarily fulfil itself because of its very likeness to the love of God;— it is no longer blasphemy to say: "O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again, and with God be the rest." Knowledge shall have its full fruition, so that here below, without distrust or impatience, we may do our work, even underground work, never to be revealed to, or rewarded by, men, "aiming at a million" which God has not placed outside our reach. Work of every worthy sort is made possible because in line with what God requires from His partners. The artist in John Masefield's poem, *Dauber,* who, striving for the knowledge and skill to paint aright the sea-scape, works as a common sailor and falls from the slippery mast, expresses a tremendous truth when he cries: *"It shall go on."*

"The eager faces glowered red like coal;
They glowed, the great sea glowed, the sails, the mast.
'It will go on,' he cried aloud, and passed."

Even our unfulfilled hopes, nay, our very failures, have promise of consummation in the hope:

"All we have willed, or hoped, or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the earth to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by."

Perhaps Browning fails to give the complete Christian expression of the doctrine of immortality because he is too much concerned with the implications of the Incarnation as they bear upon the development of the individual human life. The desire of reunion with a loved one, or the desire to fill one's cup of knowledge, must not be placed out of relation with the fulfilment of the eternal purpose in which each individual perfection has its place. The Christian faith which looks to heaven as the mere opportunity for gaining personal ends, however exalted, is as defective as the Buddhism which makes nothing at all of these individual perfections. The purpose which goes on is that we have called cosmic, and we go along with it because the cosmos is not complete without its parts, particularly those parts which represent the supreme gains of the evolutionary process.

One Christian poet, and one only, has given us the needed synthesis, and one turns gladly to the great Florentine, who, with wings more divinely strong than those of any Icarus, has soared into the upper regions of Christian philosophy, that he may suggest for us something of the comprehensive sweep of the religion of Christ as it bears

upon the world of reality. In Dante's *Divina Commedia.* I find the thought with which to close this brief and imperfect survey of a great subject. We find here the dramatization of most of what I have tried to say.

The poet's theme is the infinite energy of the Divine Will, fulfilling the purpose of Divine Wisdom, sustained by the inexhaustible force of Almighty Love, "the love that moves the sun and the other stars."

All this, the expression of the very nature and character of God, is seen operant on the cosmic material which, however apparently refractory, has affinity with the Will, Reason, and Heart of God. But the created will is as yet weak and errant, the created reason gropes with unopened eyes, the created love is as yet self-centred and imperfect. If Creation, according to the Divine plan, is to be taken up into partnership, that the Universe may become Cosmos, one harmonious and perfected whole, God must lift His work to His own level. How may this be effected? To lower the divine standard in order to make the creature inheritor of a heaven less splendid than the dwelling place of God, is to do violence to the fidelity of the Creator to His plan and to contradict the optimism of Almighty Love. To crush the creature into servile compliance with the Supreme Will is to do violence to the freedom which is part of the essential endowment of man.

What other course is open conceivably except

the process of divine education, which employs judgment as the means of holding up before the eyes of men the standards of divine holiness and trains men to aspire to and to love these standards by the patience and faith and love which represent the method of the Cross?

Hence the destiny of each and all must be viewed in relation to man's attitude in the presence of God's inexorable love. The will that revolts against the eternal law, thinking that by persistence in revolt it may either be left free to sin or may gain immunity from suffering for sin, must learn the lesson that we are by our very nature bound to suffer, not for sinning, but by sinning. The rebellious soul must inevitably find hell as the reaction of his own attitude to the Will which alone is his peace. Then, secondly, the will which repents its wilfulness, but suffers still from the weakness which the habit of sin has left behind, must be sustained and aided, as well as disciplined, until this weakness has been outgrown. And, thirdly, the will which has, without other compulsion than that of love, learned the peace which flows from the following of the law which is that of its own nature as well as the will of God, must enter into that fulness of joy in the Paradise which is essentially nearness to the Throne of God.

Two things in all this are held to be fundamental.

The first is that God evermore respects the free-

dom of His creature's being, even as He must respect His own. The gains of evolution are in this respect absolute, not wantonly to be tossed aside out of indifference or despair. God does not create, as was supposed of Brahma, worlds which are outbreathed in sport and again inbreathed as things no more substantial than a mirage. In the lowest depths of hell, as well as in the spheres of Paradise, the optimism of divine love holds fast that which far-seeingness of divine faith launched into being. God is indeed "the Hound of Heaven," who through all the aeons follows after the soul which is fain to evade Him. That soul must yield at last the confession:

> "Halts by me that footfall:
> Is my gloom after all
> Shade of His hand outstretched caressingly?
> 'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
> I am He Whom thou seekest!
> Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'"

Thus it is not merely man's longing for immortality which procures its final satisfaction, but God's fidelity to His own primal purpose, His regard for "His own Name's sake," as well as His regard for the peace of His children.

The second point is that on which I have already insisted, namely, that God regards all personal values as necessarily to be judged in relation to the whole. All individual perfection is conditioned by its fitting into the whole plan. It is thus that we are able to round off our conception

of the Christian fellowship which we have all along been trying to keep in mind. Individual evolution and social evolution reach their consummation at one single point.

The pains of the *Inferno* are pains such as result from man's selfish disregard of the social rights which his sin has violated. In proportion as he sins against society does he sink to the lowest vortex of self-abasement. The miserly and the spendthrift lose their very names, the things which most mark man's individuality; thieves lose the confidence which even thieves desire on the part of their fellows; liars lose that faith in the word of man which even liars realize to be a necessary foundation for society. And, at the awful focus of the horrible funnel, in the thick-ribbed ice, is Lucifer, the last embodiment of self, the supreme traitor against the Divine plan, all alone but for the three typical traitors he macerates in his infernal jaws, Cassius, Brutus, and Judas, betrayers of the purpose which would have had all men under one rule of Church and State.

Then as we survey the paths which encircle the Mount of *Purgatory* we see men climbing, and learning as they climb the corrective of their former sins in the discipline of healing fellowship. The proud lean on one another's shoulders, who once chose to walk alone; the envious learn through purged eyes to look upon their fellows in love. And so on, till all the weakness of sin which once kept men separate is done away and

entry is opened into the beauties of the terrestrial Paradise.

Once again, we see in the *Paradiso* men discovering their real joy in ever closer fellowship as they mount from planetary sphere to planetary sphere and so towards the Beatific Vision. In all the spheres the various forms of celestial blessedness are related to some symbol of fellowship. The theologians who formed parties in the lower life are here to be seen hand in hand making the perfect circle of truth, the circle which revolves so rapidly that every single truth is blended into the great wheel of stainless light. The martyrs in the heaven of Mars form together the glorious cross of Paradise, that Cross which is still the symbol of the redeeming energy of the Divine Love. The rulers in Jupiter spell out together the motto; "Love righteousness, ye that are judges of the earth," and form the symbolic figure of the Imperial Eagle. The mystics in Saturn make through the fellowship of their ecstasy the celestial ladder on which angels ascend and descend between earth and heaven. So from sphere to sphere men's spirits are carried from one glory of communion to another, until at last the goal of all desire is reached, where all souls are knit together into the great White Rose of Bliss, which opens to the light streaming upon it from the face of God, and sends up into that face the fragrance of a perfected human devotion.

What a vision of Creation is here presented, the

fruit of all the toil of endless aeons, the victory of the patience of Infinite Love, the *Rosa mystica,* with every petal perfect in its individual beauty blended into the one perfect form of the universal Rose. Surely here is the Rose to which the words of the poet apply:

"What is there hid in the heart of a rose,
Mother mine?
Ah, who knows, who knows, who knows?
A Man that died on a lonely hill
May tell you perhaps, but none other will,
Little child.

"What does it take to make a rose,
Mother mine?
The God that died to make it knows.
It takes the world's eternal wars,
It takes the sun and all the stars,
It takes the might of heaven and hell,
And the everlasting love as well,
Little child."

It is the making of this Rose which is the plot of that Cosmic Epic of which we have been trying to follow the development from point to point along some small part of the way. Vision may well "fail the towering fantasy," however we view the stupendous theme, whether we look back to a beginning or forward to a consummation. But, fail as we may and falter, it must needs hearten us to turn our eyes from what is little and local to gain even the faintest glimpse of the plan which embraces all "from life's minute beginnings" up to the glory of Creator and Creation at one.

It is heartening to discover that all the tremendous reaches of time when the universe must have seemed lifeless and void were still not outside the operation of the Divine Spirit; that all the countless aeons when life was slowly climbing out of the water and the mire to inherit the dry land and the upper air were not to be left to the dominion of the dragons that "tare one another in the primeval slime," but were instinct already with purpose; that God did not leave Himself without witness even in the days when the first appearance of man seemed to lead for millennium after millennium to nothing better than the Cro-Magnon; that in all the ages since our impatience is rebuked when we measure the changes our own scant history is able to record of the upward way and take heart for the ages which are yet to come.

"This hath He done, and shall we not adore Him;
This shall He do, and can we still despair;
Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before Him;
Cast at His feet the burthen of our care;
Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
Glad and regretful, confident and calm—
Then through all life, and what is after living,
Thrill to the music of Creation's psalm."

Did I not say that the ultimate summing up of the epic of the Universe must correspond worthily with the opening verse of Scripture which proclaims: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"?

So it is that, looking expectantly towards the

goal, we, with all creation represented as the Four Living Ones around the Throne, and with the Church of all ages and dispensations from the first birth of religious emotion, represented by the Four and Twenty Elders, and with the Angelic host to the uttermost rim of infinity, representative of all that lies beyond our tiny but most significant planet, are able, even though we now see but as through a glass darkly and not yet face to face, to join in the great *Amen Chorus* of Creation and say:

"Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain,
To receive the Power and Riches and Wisdom and Might
and Honor and Glory and Blessing."

"And every created thing which is in the Heaven and on the Earth and under the Earth and in the Sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying:

"Unto Him that sitteth on the Throne,
And unto the Lamb,
Be the Blessing and the Honor and the Glory and the
Dominion for ever and ever."
"And the Four Living Ones said, Amen,
And the Elders fell down and worshipped."

"HALLELUJAH TO THE MAKER.
HALLELUJAH, MAN IS MADE."

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